

Kakatiya Journal of Historical Studies

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**Department of History  
& Tourism Management**

Kakatiya University

Warangal - 506009, A.P. INDIA.

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## EDITORIAL

The Kakatiya Journal of Historical Research is a long felt desire of the Department of History. As the Department has grown over the years, in its ability to organise academic events such as Seminars, Conferences, Regional and National Congresses. So in the process it has also grown in academic competence. The University Department has earlier requested certain prominent historians of the country, apart from the colleagues to contribute papers exclusively for the journal and they have responded positively.

History is mother science to all sciences of the society of the world. Other sciences may provide us a partial picture of knowledge and conclusions. But whereas History gives us 'holistic idea' relating to the nature of growth and development of knowledge through the ages society of a country. Application of knowledge in social life may continue to influence the subsequent generations of the society of a country and it is expected that better education will serve such a purpose in a better way.

The so called education which existed, in India under the form of 'Gurukula System', reserved knowledge of 'state craft and warfare' was confined to a limited sections of society and actually those who were involved in 'Production' were never allowed to get themselves 'educated' under the Gurukula System. And those aristocrats who entered into the 'Gurukula System' as a right because of their religion and caste 'superiority or background' never bothered about the actual production. Hence for centuries there was a separation of 'education' from the production processes and productive culture and the growth of so called knowledge was nothing to do with the growth of skills, innovation and productivity. Hence during the early periods of education development, the so called knowledge that was generated by the Gurukula System was different from that of the 'peoples knowledge' which believed in labour skill and productivity and the production that helped the society to survive. This analogy also can be extended and applied to the growth and development of literature, which represented only, the aristocratic culture and its 'particularistic knowledge' by ignoring the productive culture and people's knowledge. For quite a long time there has been no reference in history about the 'peoples' knowledge and productive culture and as a result whatever is found in the written form could carry only a distorted information and distorted



knowledge. Hence distorted knowledge has resulted in distorted wealth and uneven development.

The modern education system being influenced by the needs of industrial revolution has carried its 'word and message' to the entire civilized world and gradually attempts were made to universalise education and knowledge, so that more and more people could be brought into the fold of newly emerging industrialised production process. This has served three purposes: one, it could break the monopoly of the so called knowledge activity centered around the Gurukula System which was restricted to a few. Second, it could expand the education system by universalizing the entry while facilitating the spread of knowledge even amongst those who actually involved in the production process and Third, the recorded history, started explaining the role played by the productive communities in building the society and contributing to the growth of knowledge that fulfilled the needs of the society. This process again however could not be continued for a long due to entry of industrial capital, market penetration and separation of capital from labour. And again those who controlled the capital started building the 'particularistic knowledge and literature' that served their own 'particular interests' while again ignoring the 'general interest' of the society.

In view of this, it has been now considered essential to rebuild the history of society while collecting the real facts that helped build the society and the role played by those who actually built the society and civilization.

Hence there is a need to rewrite Indian history which inspires and encourages the work culture in Indian Society.

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# THE ENVISIONING OF A NATION

## A Defence of the Idea of India

Irfan Habib

This paper deals with a study of the growth of India as a country and nation, and some reflections on how the nation itself is in danger of subversion by the ideas and actions of the Sangh Parivar. If the study goes into certain details or takes more of your time than it should have, I beg to apologise for it in advance.

In history nothing has existed from all times; and countries form no exception to this rule. Even where geographical features set seemingly natural limits to a territory, the latter's recognition, as a country has not automatically followed. The several indigenous communities inhabiting the Australian continent, did not know, because of lack of sufficient exploration, that they were all on the same island; they were also not aware, since they did not know of any people outside Australia, that they as a group were distinct from inhabitants of other countries in certain important cultural ways. Thus there was no country like Australia before the 19th century.

We can see from this example that geographical knowledge was also a pre-requisite before the concept of India as a country could arise. We need not be surprised, then, that such a concept is not present in the Vedas. The first firm evidence of the "idea of India" (courtesy, Sunil Khilnari) is, perhaps, no older than Gautama Buddha's time, some two thousand five hundred years ago (c.500 B.C.), when we first hear of the "Sixteen Mahajanapadas", which together comprised Northern India and parts of Afghanistan. But it is with the Mauryan emperor Asoka's inscriptions found all over India, datable to around 250 B.C., that we find one of India's early names, "Jambudipa" (the Pali form of "Jambudvipa"), used in his Rock Edict I, for the country as a whole.

The cultural affinities of the Indian people, isolated from others by high mountain ranges of the north and by the Indian Ocean in the south, could only be marked more certainly, when there was knowledge of other people outside of these borders, people, that is, who could be seen as culturally different. Asoka says in his Rock Edict XIII that the "Yonas" (Greeks) were different because "they had no Samanas (Buddhist priests) and Brahmanas among them". Thus a cultural distinction could reinforce a territorial one. A similar distinction occurs in the reference made in the Manusmriti (c.100 B.C) to foreigners (mlechchhas): theirs are lands where Brahmanas do not perform sacrifices or the "twice-born" dwell (Manu, II, 22-24). The listing of India's regions in the Mahabharata or Samudragupta's Allahabad inscription or Kalidasa's Meghaduta underlined again a fairly distinct concept of India as a geographical and cultural world of its own. The concept could indeed lead to rigid insularity. Alberuni, studying Indian civilization in his Arabic work, the Kitabu-l Hind, written in c.1035 at Lahore, commented adversely on the Indians'



sense of isolation. They believed, he said, that "there was no (other) country like theirs," and had no desire to learn about or from other peoples.

Alberuni's own book, whose writing the famous historian K.M. Panikkar described as "a moment in world history", is itself a milestone in the evolution of the comprehension of India as a cultural unity. It is the first comprehensive study of the Indian civilization in any language (including Sanskrit!). This fact reminds us that the consciousness of one's belonging to a country can also be reinforced by outsiders' realization that its inhabitants have institutions and features different from theirs. The Iranians had long extended their version of the name of the Sindhu river, which they called "Hind(u)" (changing 's' into 'h' in early Iranian) to the country lying along and beyond that river. Whence came the name 'India' given by the Greeks, and even possibly the Chinese 'Yin-tu'. In post-Hellenistic Iran territorial names began to be given the suffix -stan, so that 'Hind(u)' would become 'Hind(u)stan', on the analogy of other Iranian territorial names (Sakastan [=Seistan], Gurjistan, Khuzistan, etc.). Hind(u)stan, just like the name 'Hind', is an entirely Iranian word. The style of writing 'Hindusthan', as if it is a Sanskrit word meaning 'land of the Hindus' is a modern invention: the word in this form is unknown to classical Sanskrit. We must also remind ourselves that the word 'Hindu' too is of purely Iranian origin, meaning an inhabitant of "Hind(u)" or India. It was taken from the Iranians by the Arabs and Muslims in general, among whom uptill the time of Alberuni there was little reason to distinguish between those who were Indians, and those who, besides being Indians, followed religious sects other than Islam. Once the Muslims established themselves in large parts of India, especially from the 13th century onwards, the latter restrictive meaning of the word began to predominate, and 'Hindu' assumed a religious colour. But by the Hindus themselves the name was not accepted before the latter half of the 14th century, when the Vijyanagara ruler and, later, the ruler of Mewar are found styling themselves 'Hindu sultans' ('Hindu suratrana'). Simultaneously, the words 'Hindi' and 'Hindustani' came into use for Indians in general, the designations being used by the poets Amir Khusrau (d.1324) and Isami (1350), when they spoke of both the Hindus and Muslim inhabitants of this country taken together.

This discussion is not really meant to be a digression into mere linguistic history, for the linguistic usage had some new concepts behind it. Along with this common nomenclature of Hindi and Hindustani for both the Hindus and Muslims of India, came an understanding of a common heritage and a composite culture. If we are looking for patriotic statements about India and its natural and cultural greatness, then, surely Amir Khusrau's Nuh Sipihr (1318) in Persian must be identified as the cleanliest and dearest of such statements. The author lauds "love for one's country" (hubb-i watan). His country, India (Hind), he says, contains people speaking different languages, which he lists -- a list that includes Kannada (Dhaur-samanduri), Telugu (Telangi) and Tamil (Ma'bari). (Malayalam does not seem yet to have been fully separated from Tamil, so its omission is probably not



surprising in Khusrau's otherwise comprehensive list). All these languages he calls "Hindwi" (or Indian) languages, being used "by common people for all purposes." Besides them, he praises Sanskrit, the language of the learned for its rich literature. He carefully records that Persian too has become a language of India, because people have learnt it "since the coming of the Ghorians and Turks." Here is then a picture of the Indian people with their various languages yet constituting a single whole.

What makes Khusrau's verses especially patriotic is his avowed argument of the precedence of India over other countries. He speaks of the superiority of its products and fruits, its animals, the beauty of its women, the learning and piety of the Brahmans, and India's numerous cultural achievements such as the invention of numerals and chess, the compilation of the Panchatantra (Kalila-o-damna), etc. Clearly, such a comprehensive picture of India and of its culture, which is seen not as exclusive (as Alberuni had judged it), but open to all, innovative and tolerant, reveals a new understanding that could only have come because conditions had changed. This change was surely the one due to the confluence of the two civilizations, ancient Indian and Islamic, that had now taken place -- a momentous confluence, which my late friend Professor Athar Ali correctly described as the "medieval efflorescence".

This conception of India and its distinct composite culture reached its high tide under Akbar, the great Mughal emperor (1556-1605). In his minister Abu-l Fazl's A'in-i Akbari (1595) a book-length description is given of the culture of India, it being the most detailed account of its society religious schools, learning, and arts of India written after Alberuni. Significantly, the Muslim component is also carefully included. The same reign saw the first history of India, the Tabaqat-i Akbari (1592), composed by Nizamuddin Ahmad, a book which in Persian would be followed by a succession of others on the same subject. This underlining of the concept of India as a country with a distinct history of its own could now be reinforced by the long and stable unity given to India by the Mughal Empire -- an instrument of unity visible to the non-literate and the ordinary people as well. Tara Chand (1928), indeed, argued in a much-quoted passage that such dominance by a single power gave to India "a political uniformity and a sense of larger allegiance", necessary for sustaining the sense of a single country.

We see, then, how the idea of India was formed, and enriched step by step. The sense of a single country was undoubtedly stronger in the Mughal Empire than it had been at any other time, so far as the evidence of historical records goes. However, its entity as a country did not yet make India a "nation", which it could only be when loyalty to the country as a political unit could be demanded. In a much acclaimed book, Imagined Communities, first published in 1983, Benedict Anderson has sought to portray the "nation" as mainly the product of imagination. So, indeed, it is; but is this not the case with all kinds of communities? The religious community, far from being natural, is even more a product of pure imagination. It is largely a question of words: historians have long spoken of "consciousness" (e.g., "national



consciousness") instead of "imagination", and yet that word did not make the nation seem as unreal as it does after Anderson's term "imagined community" has been popularised. The special question to ask, in any case, is why countries – or territories within previously perceived countries – begin to be imagined as nations at only a particular time in history.

Not long ago, the development of a common language was regarded as the most crucial element in the formation of a nation. The Oxford English Dictionary, in the part published in 1906, defined "nation" as containing people "closely associated by common descent, language or history". Stalin too, while defining a "nation" in 1913, insisted that the nation arose on "the basis of a common language." While "common language" was certainly one instrument of bringing people together to a consciousness of their cultural unity, the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm has acknowledged in his study of Nations and Nationalities since 1870 that "language was merely one, and not necessarily the primary, way of distinguishing between cultural communities". India, a country of several languages, could in the older definition be conceived, at best, as a country comprising several "nationalities", each based on a separate language; but we now realise that if language is not the primary criterion, but rather only an instrument in the process of nation-formation, then, India too, could emerge as a nation in due course, despite its various languages, whatever the conventional definitions of the term.

While modern nation-states arose first in Western Europe in the sixteenth century as capitalism began to develop in its mercantilist stage and provided economic grounds for strong 'national' monarchies, the major impulse outside of Europe has been different. Anderson has called attention to the formation of nations in Latin America early in the nineteenth century without any such capitalistic development. He underlines the fact that these nations were the creations of the Creoles or local white settlers, who as land-holders were involved in a major conflict of interest with the bulk of the inhabitants, whether Amerindians or African slaves. The concessions made by the Creoles to the other sections of the populations as components of the same nation were usually nominal or cosmetic. If still Bolivar and San Martin are revered as nation-builders, the reason lies surely in that they liberated large areas of South America from Spanish colonialism, which was draining away a large amount of wealth from that continent. Anderson does not see that it is primarily this resistance to colonialism that was the source of Latin American nationalism and of the creation of Latin American nations; the configurations of their actual boundaries, or even distinct identities, in relation to each other, are only of very secondary significance.

But if resistance to colonialism was the main source of nation-formation in Latin America, that process would not have been undertaken if the rebels did not have access to ideas about nationhood. These ideas were not indigenous, either in Latin America or elsewhere. The Creoles, despite the limited extent of higher education among them, which Anderson comments on, spoke Spanish and were



directly inspired by the great slogans of the French Revolution (1789). "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Not surprisingly, all the nations created out of the Spanish dominions in the American hemisphere were firmly established as republics, though behind that facade there was no real democracy. In this respect, one can contrast the Latin American revolts with our own Rebellion of 1857. The latter, despite its massive scale, remained bereft of any explicit consciousness of nationhood (at even the level of the political unity of the entire country) among its leaders.

The visionary that he was, Ram Mohan Roy had seen in 1830 that India could not be a nation because it was "divided up among castes." He could, perhaps, have added, "and religious communities" after the word "castes". Unless the Indians could break these barriers, which gave them different identities, of which the sense of attachment to the country was only one and not very primary either, they could not constitute themselves into a nation. The social barriers, therefore, needed to be removed in people's minds, and for the caste and other parochial identities to recede, before true nationalism could be generated. Here the importance of bourgeois-democratic ideas that India received from Europe cannot be overstressed. This was the basis of what Marx called the "regenerating role" of colonialism, which by forcing the pace of English-language dissemination for its own convenience of administration, opened the doors to the entry of these ideas. Marx in his article, "The Future Results of British Rule in India" (1853) acutely predicted how the Indians, armed by these ideas and assisted by the spread of modern material circumstances, could become "strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether."

One has to recognise that the movements of social reform, directed to removing those barriers that separated vast sections of our people and bred innumerable parochial loyalties, originated from the influx of modern ideas. To portray these efforts as stemming from any past traditions in our civilization, are absolutely unhistorical, whether one has in mind the "Hindu" or "Islamic" heritages. The concept of "nationhood", which is, in essence, the primacy of the national identity over all other parochial, caste, community and local identities, could come into being only once the social barriers began to loosen their vice-like grip over people's minds. For this reason, the social reform movements, initiated by Ram Mohan Roy (d.1832) and given their strong orientation by Keshav Chandra Sen (d.1884), in respect of both caste disabilities and women's rights, played the role of true building blocks for the Indian nation. In 1909 in his Hind Swaraj, Gandhi applauded the institutions of old India, and was very casual about their defects. But upon his return to India from South Africa in 1915, the fight against caste disabilities and for women's equality became an ever-growing part of his endeavours; and he showed by his own practice, as no other individual Indian leader did, that this fight was inseparable from the struggle for national independence. Incidentally, this was at the root of the discord between him and the forces that have now adopted the "Hindutva" signboard.



While the social reform movements took the initial steps towards making the people feel one beyond the frontiers created by our past culture, India's transformation into a nation received impetus from yet another and more deliberate source: the vision of the national destiny as one of deliverance of the masses from exploitation and impoverishment. This notion of economic liberation too had its external sources: it received its earliest inspiration, again, from the French Revolution; and both the economic nationalism of List and the socialism of Marx would in time exert their influences on Indian nationalists.

One of the important features of Indian nationalism from its very early stages was thus the criticism of Britain's economic exploitation of India. The "Grand Old Man" of the National Movement, Dadabhoi Naoroji, drew attention constantly from the 1870's to the impoverishment imposed on India as a result of this exploitation. The very title of his book, Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India (published in 1901), called attention to the fact that the greatest victims of British rule were the poverty-stricken masses of India. In his two-volume Economic History of British Rule in India (1901, 1903), constituting a detailed critique of the British economic performance in India, the redoubtable R.C. Dutt took a similar position. "Every true Indian hopes", he said at one place, "that the small cultivation of India will not be replaced by landlordism", as if it was the small peasant for whom the patriotic heart must beat. It was not that these early nationalists were unmindful of the interests of the small, emerging middle classes and business interests; that these were often at the centre of their interests becomes clear from Bipan Chandra's detailed work, The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India. This concern for the middle classes was not concealed, but, indeed, proclaimed by the nationalist spokesmen: their argument was that the educated middle classes not only represented their own cause, but also that of the unlettered masses, who could not represent themselves. Despite the limitations of this position, the fact that the nationalists made the conditions of the poor a critical element of their arguments against colonialism assumed cardinal importance in the later popularization of nationalist ideology. Simplified versions of the economic critiques of colonialism, such as the one in Gandhiji's Hind Swaraj, appeared in pamphlets and booklets in practically every Indian language. As these ideas became more widespread, these helped to open the doors to mass participation in the National Movement itself.

This participation came with Gandhi's own experiments with mass mobilization (beginning with the Champaran peasants' satyagraha, 1917), the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement, the emergence of the Left in the 1920s, and the heavy peasant and women's participation in the Civil Disobedience of 1930-31. This transformation of the Movement demanded a more specific delineation of the nation's future, once it was to be free. Neither a modern capitalist state, the dream of the Moderates, nor a reformed Old India of Gandhiji's Hind Swaraj, could meet the aspirations of the classes that had now become the main force behind freedom struggle. This new situation became the basis for one of the most important



documents of the Indian National Congress, the Karachi Resolution on Fundamental Rights, March-August, 1931.

This resolution began by declaring, "Political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions." It envisioned India as a democratic state, with full adult suffrage, equality of women with men, constitutional observance of "neutrality" in matters of religion and protection of minorities. Provisions were to be made for protecting labour and for securing land, rent reduction and relief from indebtedness to peasants. Capitalism too would be restricted; "The State shall own or control key industries and services, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport." It thus envisaged a strong Public Sector to sustain industrial growth in the interest of the country as a whole. (SAHMAT, New Delhi, has done well to republish the text of the resolution in its booklet, Indian People in the Struggle for Freedom.)

The Karachi Resolution represented the common vision for free India shared by all sections of the National Movement, from the Gandhians to the Communists. It was a pledge, repeated in the Congress manifesto for the 1937 elections, on the basis of which the people were asked to give their support to the National Movement.

There were two streams, however, which were fundamentally opposed to not only the principles of the Karachi Resolution, but to the very idea of a democratic, secular nation. These were the Hindu and Muslim communalists.

At an early stage of the development of freedom struggle religion played an undeniable part as an instrument of mobilization. The appeal to religion by the rebels of 1857 (beginning with the issue of greased cartridges) is part of every school-textbook account of that great event. In the 1890's Tilak invoked religion to develop a nationalist ideology, which sometimes seemed as anti-Muslim as it was anti-British. Aurobindo Ghosh provided a philosophical basis for this "Hindu nationalism." On the other hand, Jamaluddin Afghani, who had spent some years in India (1877-82), developed his theory of Pan-Islamism, to unite peoples of all Muslim countries against Imperialism. Clearly, while radically anti-imperialist, such communal versions of nationalism could only help to divide the Indian people. Jamaluddin Afghani had himself been acute enough to realise that Hindus and Muslims must remain united in India in order to oppose the British, as he told an audience of the young Muslims of Calcutta; and his pan-Islamic "nation" did not therefore include India. Tilak too, in his later days, shifted more and more to an accommodative position, making Hindu-Muslim unity his special object: he was the main architect of the Congress-League Pact of 1914, where the Congress accepted separate electorates for Muslims and the Muslim League adopted the ideal of "Home Rule" (Swaraj) for India. This was a major act of recognition that India was a nation equally composed of all its religious communities, as the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress, to their honour, had always insisted.



As the National Movement grew in scale and began to assume a truly mass character, its mobilization of peasants and workers, and women and other socially and economically oppressed strata on the basis of increasingly radical set of promises for "the 98 per cent" (C.R. Das, 1922) grew apace. This resulted in a growing inclination of propertied interests, especially landlords, to shift to communal positions in order to oppose freedom struggle. This received due encouragement from Imperialism, and the Simon Commission Report (1930) laboured to deny on the basis of its religious (and linguistic) diversities that India was a nation at all. The ground was thus being created for a full-blown "two-nation" theory.

It is often supposed that the "two-nation" theory was a product only of Muslim communalism. The fact, however, is that the slogan "Hindu, Hindi, Hindustan" has a much older history than of "Pakistan", a term only coined by C. Rahmat Ali in the 1930s, and adopted by the Muslim League only after its Lahore Resolution of 1940. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded in 1925, openly espoused the ideal of a "Hindu Rashtra" (Hindu Nation), which, by excluding Muslims (and other minorities), necessarily implied that there are two or more nations in India. Hindu communalism thus had essentially the same aim of breaking the nation's unity (and so undermining the National Movement), as had Muslim communalism. It is thus no accident that the RSS throughout its existence stood consistently aside from the freedom struggle.

The Partition of 1947 was a great test for the Indian people. Despite Pakistan having been founded as a Muslim state, the people of India decided to retain for the Indian Republic an entirely democratic and secular character. It was a decision that communal forces in India have never accepted. Gandhiji's assassination (30 January 1948) was a brutal crime committed solely to proclaim that opposition. (No amount of fasting on 30 January now can wash away the sins of those who shared and continue to share the ideas of Gandhi's assassin).

It is a matter of immense danger to the entire legacy of the National Movement and to India's entity as a nation that those who jubilated over Gandhiji's murder, are in power today. Many factors may be evoked to explain how this has come to pass: the failure of the Congress over the long period it governed, to fulfil its economic and social pledges; the setbacks to socialism received in recent years; the failure of the secular parties to unite; and, not the least, the shift of Big Business patronage to BJP, as a party far more pliant to its interests (as the RSS Swadeshi expert, Mr Guruswamy has just learnt to his edification!). The costs to the nation of this development are already enormous. If the demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in 1992 was not enough to humiliate and defame the nation throughout the world, the orchestrated barbarous attacks on Christians are adding a new dimension to the undermining of our secularism. The Pokharan tests and the bellicose official statements that followed them have heavily damaged India's long-term interests in the world arena, all for gaining a momentary applause within the country. While



public attention is often riveted to the successive Parliamentary crises and public scandals, the new rulers' insidious work of dismantling the secular structure, using TV and press for communal propaganda, promoting communal and chauvinistic myths in the name of history, and changing syllabi and text books to accord with the new official doctrine, goes on unabated. The long-term threat to the very secular and democratic nature of the Indian nation is, therefore, extremely grave; and, if this process of saffronization is allowed to continue, the consequences for the nation's unity and integrity could bring about a disaster.

It must be realised that our nation has been created by the Indian people after centuries of endeavour. First, as we have seen, they began to have a vague conception of India as a country some two thousand and five hundred years ago. Thereafter, in stages, as their knowledge about themselves and others grew, they began to identify the cultural features that were common to them, and to recognise a unity in the diversity of their religions and languages. But it was their resistance to colonialism and absorption of modern democratic (and later socialist) ideas that began to transform India from a country – a geographical and cultural entity – into a true nation. India is, then, a creation of the Indian people, a product of not simply of nature or even of blind circumstances, but essentially of their consciousness. If it has been so created, it can also be destroyed if ideas change. In the last ten years or so we have actually seen established nations destroyed, such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The bulk of the people of the Soviet Union, according to all accounts, did not wish to see their nation broken up, as was clear from the only referendum that was held on the issue (1990). Yet, since the people were not vigilant enough, and power came into the hands of a small group that undertook a violent campaign of falsehoods in the name of Russian nationalism, invoking even Czarist symbols, and ideologically confusing and disarming a whole people. What consequences this has had for the former territories of the Soviet Union, especially Russia, is for everyone now to see, as falling production, beggary and starvation stalk the land, which once contained the world's second superpower.

Such lessons are important for us in India. If we too are not vigilant, if we too lose the battle of ideas, as we did in the case of the Pakistan demand in 1947, then India too may not be safe as a nation. It is, therefore, time for everyone to realise that the present BJP government is not just another bourgeois regime, and that its chauvinistic and basically fascist ideology would not be modified by the compulsions of governance, as is so often fondly hoped. Special responsibility in this struggle for protecting the nation rests on the Left forces: their great advantage is that Marxism provides the most cogent arguments against communalism and all divisive and anti-democratic tendencies. As such, it is the duty of all Marxists to help build a united front of all secular and truly nationalist forces to take up cudgels against the forces of Hindutva and all other fundamentalist and parochial ideologies. This would be a splendid way of defending the legacy of Karl Marx that the task of philosophers is not only to interpret the world, but also to change it.



# **"OPEN DOOR" IN INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

**Shireen Moosvi**

## **I**

Indian historiography of today owes much to the nationalist schools of history that developed before Independence. The prefix "nationalist" by no means disqualifies them from being counted as unbiased or scientific historians. On the contrary, many to whom we apply this adjective were "nationalist" mainly because they rejected the view, current among not a few British historians, that the history of the "natives" could not be studied as one would study the history of any European people. "Native" sources were untrustworthy, their evidence no better than that of courtiers or religious fanatics, their very natures different from those of their masters, so that they did not have any history other than political or religious worth talking about. An Indian historian who on the other hand, held that Indian sources were susceptible to the same kind of critical examination as those of other peoples, that India too had its economic, social or cultural history became by this very statement a nationalist. Such a historian did not thereby glorify India's past, but simply asked that it be studied with an open mind. I may recall two historians of this tradition: Tara Chand, author of the *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (first pub., 1922), and Mohammad Habib, author of *Mahmud of Ghazni* (pub., 1924), did not by any means gave an unqualified endorsement to either the culture or the character described; yet their texts were treated as important works of the nationalist schools. In other words, then, we have inherited from our nationalist precursors an admonition to use the scientific and critical approach to our past, which we ought to cherish.

Secondly, the nationalist historians did not accept the "White Man's burden" view of modern Indian history. The model was set by R.C. Dutt's splendid two volume *Economic History of India under British Rule* (first ed. 1902 & 1904). While by no means entirely denigrating British rule, Dutt was unsparing in his description of the rapacity of conquerors, oppressive Settlements, the Tribute realization and de-industrialization. There is much that is still valid in Dutt's work, despite the obvious low opinion which American authors like Furber or Mc Alpin appear to have of him.

It was a part of the nationalist tradition again to study regional history under the impulse of bringing it closer to people. One may recall S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar's reconstruction of South Indian history. Of a different trend was Tapan Raychaudhuri's Multi-faceted study, *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir*, though it appeared after Independence.

It is not my purpose to be uncritical about nationalist endeavours. In order to prove that the British ruined India, there was a tendency to picture pre-British India in rosier colours than was warranted. This may be seen, for example, in Radhakamal Mukherji's *Economic History of India, 1600-1800*, in many ways a



significant work, but undoubtedly with a case to argue. Or, to show that we had the same genius as our masters, it seemed proper to speak of our local self-government and guilds or of our colonies, Radhakumud Mookerji wrote reputed tomes *Local Government in Ancient India*, (1920) and *Indian Shipping — a History of the Seaborne Trade and Maritime Activities of the Indians from the Earliest Times*, (1912). The information in these works is not out-of-date, but their approach is. And there is no doubt that one must exercise caution in respect of this part of the nationalist heritage.

2. Within nationalist historiography, there developed in time the Marxist trend. Its early products were R.P. Dutt, *India Today* (1940), and Shevlankar's *Problem of India* (1940), both dealing with India under British rule. Marxist influences are perceptible in Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* as well. But full scale Marxist writing came only later. D.D. Kosambi's *Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (1956) was essentially a Marxist interpretation of ancient India, while Mohammad Habib in his long introduction to a reprint of Elliot and Dowson's *History of India, & c.*, Vol.II, essayed an interpretation of the Delhi Sultanate. In the second line came R.S. Sharma, with his many papers persuing Marxist analysis of ancient social phenomena, culminating in two major works *Sudras in Ancient India* (1958) and *Indian Feudalism*, (1965). Irfan Habib's principal Marxist-oriented work *Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1963) was followed by a spate of papers, a selection being now published as *Essays in Indian History, towards a Marxist Perception* (1965). The body of Marxist writing in India is now a large one, including among others D.N. Jha, Suvira Jaiswal, Iqtidar A.Khan and A. Bagchi. One can see from their work that Marxist writing has become increasingly sophisticated, using sources critically and carefully, and disdaining the early strait jacket of the fixed 'modes of production'. There has been much pioneering work on the history of ideas (e.g. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya) and of technology (e.g. Irfan Habib), which has lent richness to Marxist analysis.

There is no doubt that Marxist work has added considerable dimensions to our study of economic and social history. By concerning itself especially with mode of exploitation and the struggles of the oppressed, it has helped the historian to identify with the mass of the people, who have been regarded more as the objects rather than the subjects of history. Mainly under Marxist influence one has learnt to look more closely than ever at the sweat strained ploughman or the oppressed woman slave, and set in their place the throne and the pulpit.

A branch of historiography grew, essentially hostile to mainstream nationalism, which has come to be described as communal. Soon after Independence the Hindu and Muslim Communal schools found their standard statements in two series on either side of the border of the Partitioned subcontinent. The technically better edited and produced *History and Culture of the Indian People* ed. R.C. Majumdar and published by the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, and the *Freedom Struggle*



of the Muslims in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent, ed. I.H. Qureshi. Both these works believe in the Two-Nation theory, the former implicitly, the latter avowedly, since they assume an irreconcilable hostility between Hindus and Muslims from the very point that Islam arrived in India. The Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan volumes added chauvinism in high doses as well. The fantastic claim that Indo-Europeans originated in India and went out from here to civilize the world, now so much in fashion among academic circles close to the VHP, found its articulation in serious literature in vol. I, of the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan series.

These schools, by essentially denying what Rabindranath Tagore had thought to be the central theme of Indian history the formation of India's composite culture, both stand in direct confrontation with nationalist historiography. But the major points they raise for a historian go beyond the themes of their debate with the nationalists. It is the technical problem of historical method: the partisan reading of sources, the selectivity in presentation of facts, the projection of present day identities into the past, etc. The free invocation of religious beliefs, that are supposedly beyond the historians' province, is particularly marked. It was a common statement not long ago that "crores of Hindus" could not be wrong about matters like the *Mahabharata* or Rama's birthplace. Similarly, I.H. Qureshi and his fellow contributors found it enough justification for any course of conduct, if it could be shown to follow a Quranic injunction, however unfair or offensive that conduct might otherwise appear to us. One always needs to remind oneself, when reading these books, that a historian cannot see himself either as a lawyer appearing for a religion, or as a judge who takes it as his duty to enforce either the *dharmasastra* or the *shari'a*. Religion may have played an important role in History; but for that very reason it must become, and remain, subject to historical criticism.

## II

During the early years of our Independence, a historical school began to win over increasing number of votaries in England: it was associated with the name of Sir Lewis Namier, who had done much to unravel the individual interests and motives behind individual parliamentarians in 18th century England. His method of reading private interests behind public postures began to be applied to modern India by John Gallagher and his pupil A. Seal, who established themselves at Cambridge. Seal's interpretation of the Indian National Movement, mainly given in the *Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, was published in 1968. Seal's major effort was to argue that the Indian nationalist leaders had their community and caste constituencies to care for, and their 'nationalism' resulted from maladjustments of interests of this sort under British rule rather than any genuine national grievances: much of the agitation of the National Movement was thus of an illusory character. It was not the mass base of the nationalists that forced the British to bring forth constitutional legislation, but it was the latter which forced the *elite* nationalist leadership to seek mass support. We have similar interpretations made, within the



Namierite framework, of Gandhi by Judith Brown and Jinnah by Ayesha Jalal.

Bayly extended the range of interpretation to the 18th century by discerning a continuity of "corporate groups" from late Mughal into early British regimes in his *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, 1770-1870* (1983). If the national movement was largely an illusion to Seal, the British conquest became to Bayly a mere elaboration of processes already at work in India.

Since most of these publications appeared from Cambridge, it has become conventional to describe it as the Cambridge School. Its influence on Indian historical writing has been considerable, despite sundry protests at its immense selectivity in source-treatment. One of those schools, which, despite theological differences, have obviously been deeply influenced by the Cambridge critiques of the nationalist *elite* has been the group known as Subalterns.

2. The "Subaltern" historians started as the Indian variant of the History from Below and made use of some of Gramsci's terminology notably the term "subaltern" itself, to which Ranjit Guha in his initial essay is *Subaltern Studies*, gave a definition Gramsci would not have thought of. The "Subaltern" historians by insisting on researches in the conditions of life and thought of the ordinary people were continuing, some times with much fruitful result, the Marxist tradition. But the Marxist umbilical cord has long been cut, there is an increasing mystification about subaltern consciousness, a rejection of the "nation" (*a la'* Partha Chatterjee) and, therefore, of "national" grievances against the British. The *elite* vs. Subalterns becomes a dominant motif from them, rather than the class analysis derived from the Marxist method. Their perception of the nationalist *elite* is, then, practically identical with that of their Cambridge friends. In more recent days, therefore, the Subalterns have found regionalism and communalism to be more authentic expressions of subaltern consciousness than the dangerous phenomenon of nationalism. It becomes a matter of wonder how India at all exists, and how people (including "Subalterns") still identify themselves as "Indians"!

3. A third trend, which has began to influence Indian historiography, has emerged from France. Before World War II the *Annales* school, associated with Marc Bloch, had established itself as the proponent of a comprehensive and comparative history, in which conventional, Marxist and innovative trends all came together. After World War II, Braudel in his well-known article *Long Duree* seemed to belittle political revolutions and give crucial importance to long-range changes in social habits, psychological outlook and economic phenomena. Concern with 'mentality', marginal classes, environmental change became the hallmark of the Annales School, especially in works of Ladurie who has seemed to shift from work in the Marc Bloch tradition to 'best sellers' of impeccable scholarship. There has been much accolade showered on the new Annales approach in India by Harbans Mukhia. S. Settar's recent work (*Inviting Death & Pursuing Death*) perhaps, belongs



to this genre, although there is no explicit declaration of such allegiance. There is no doubt that the new Annales approach, as shown by Settar's work, could expose elements of belief that were not previously analysed or given attention to. Similarly, use of historical anthropology to explore small communities that had a natural or social environment of their own cannot but add to the richness of historical information. The desire to regard political formations as of inferior significance is clearly manifested in Romila Thapar's *Mauryas Revisited* (1987). Such an attitude meshes well with the increasing depreciation of the effectiveness of political regimes in South Asia stressed by B. Stein, F. Perlin and A. Wink. It seems to me that here too a large amount of historical evidence is not admitted to the historians' consideration, when dealing with political history. I need not here do more than refer to the points brought out in the current debate on Burton Stein's application of the theory of segmentary state to South India.

4. During the last two decades a new trend of thought has developed in the West, which has designated itself "Post-modernism". The very name implies a self-conscious departure from modernity, which is held to be assemblage of values and objectives which have been the special hall-mark of modern civilization: a belief in reason, in large logical frameworks, rational solutions to social ills, a common range of values summed up in the French Revolutionary watchwords, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". To Post-modernists all such firm assertions are open to question: the capitalist market place is extended to the intellectual sphere, where not strength of argument but appeal to consumer is the test of worth, with the media being the true shopping centre. As one critic puts it: "Post-Althusserian, post-modernist thinkers like Jean Francois Lyotard and Joan Baudrillard see Marxism as just one of thousand brands on permanent sale in the supermarket of ideas". Inevitably post-modernism has the potential of accommodating all the disparate, conflicting ideologies of ethnic chauvinism, and religious revivalism and fundamentalism under its umbrella. If it has not happened yet with western post-modernists today, it can happen tomorrow.

Extended to history, Post-modernism visualises many modern institutions and structures as mere imagined realities (compare Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1983). It will at once be seen that Post-modernism, therefore, holds considerable attraction for the Indian votaries of the Namierite, the Subaltern and the New Annales School who too have been questioning precisely the roles of the state and the nation in our history. In due time the propagations of the revivalist and communal viewpoint also could obtain sustenance from the Post-modernist fashion. By refusing to accept the plane on which conventional social science proceeds, Post-modernism is able to claim triumph without an encounter, and this too must be especially welcome to the latter-day critics of, or migrants from the nationalist and Marxist historiography.

My purpose in this attempt to classify the new entrants of the Indian historical world is not to assert that Indian historiography has nothing worthwhile



to learn from the outside world. On the contrary since neither Post-modernism nor the other trends discussed above, constitute together a significant part of western historiography in its home ground, I should like to reaffirm the central thesis of the nationalist historians: Indian history can be studied in the same way as the history of other countries. Reason and criticism must occupy central place in our historiography, and one should not be afraid of being called "modernist", if this is the price of holding true to these basic pillars of the historical method.



# **The 'Great' Shoe question: Tradition, Legitimacy and Power in Colonial India**

**K.N. Panikkar**

The selective appropriation of traditional cultural practices was a part of the technology of British colonial control in India. The incorporation of indigenous mores helped to invest colonial rule with an illusion of continuity and legitimacy. Since appropriation tended to impart new meanings and symbolic importance to existing practices, tradition became a site of contest. Through the debate on what constituted the authentic tradition of the 'natives', several issues germane to the question of subjection and resistance were articulated and negotiated. This essay is an attempt to explore these issues in the context of the shoe regulation of 1854 and the controversies that it entailed.

## **Clothes and Social Order**

In a pioneering study of dress and fashion in French history, Daniel Roche has shown how the complex symbolism of appearances implicit in the pattern of clothing signifies a variety of social and political ideas such as hierarchy, exclusion and respect<sup>1</sup>. That clothes and adornments have significance far beyond utilitarian functions, and that they reflect social distinctions and cultural identities have been long recognized by anthropologists<sup>2</sup>. A relationship between dress and social order in terms of power, authority, status and class, is apparent. What David Hume observed in the eighteenth century about the human body, in a sense, is applicable to dress: 'The skin, pores, muscles and nerves of a day-labourer are different from those of a man of quality. The different stations in life influence the whole fabric'<sup>3</sup>. The dress, to adopt the statement of Keith Thomas on the human body, is a historical document, reflecting the whole gamut of cultural and social relations in which the individual is placed<sup>4</sup>.

The quality, texture and design of clothes and the modes of wearing them reflect the complex relations within the social order. In all cultures, social distinctions can be broadly discerned by the differences in the mode of dress. In fact, dress often acts as an active agent in the articulation of social relations, though there is no uniform code in all cultures, which governs this articulation. Norms and customs in the West and the East are vastly different. The same practice does not carry the same meaning in different cultures. To the Europeans, for instance, taking off the hat meant a mark of courtesy, civility and a form of salutation. The Hindus hardly removed their turban (headgear) in public because of its association with honour and rank. Pulling off a man's turban is considered a grave insult and humiliation among Hindus. The turban, in the Islamic world, has a variety of functions; a symbol of spiritual succession, a gravestone embellishment and the carrier of a holy man's spiritual charisma<sup>5</sup>.



The religious, caste and regional variations did not admit of a uniform dress code in India. In Kerala, men and women were expected to uncover the upper part of the body as a mark of respect to the members of high castes. The attempt by low caste women to wear breast cloth, under the influence of Christian missionaries, resulted in a major controversy in Travancore in the first-half of the nineteenth century. Members of the upper castes viewed the attempt as an infringement of their status<sup>6</sup>. In other parts of India, distinctions were maintained through caste-class categorization of dress. But the codes of one community were not imposed on the members of other religious denominations. In Kerala, for instance. Christians and Muslims were not required to remove their upper cloth even when appearing before their landlords. In fact, Conversion; to Islam was metaphorically referred to as wearing a shirt', thus ending the semi nakedness imposed by caste restrictions. Thus, Body-cloth relationship was not defined by a single code applicable to all Indians uniformly. regardless of religious, caste or regional distinctions.

The body-cloth relationship in India, like in all other cultures, was contingent upon the 'prohibitions and commandments' internal to its culture. The negotiation and reconciliation between the 'internal' view of the 'native' and the 'external' view of the British of these prohibitions and commandments was difficult<sup>7</sup>. The British in India tended to look for customs which were homologous to European practices. Second, the British sought to implement a homogeneous practice which, given the cultural plurality in India, attracted spontaneous resistance. Third, they did not adequately realize that the body-cloth relationship in India substantially differed in public and private spaces. So, the British implemented a practice which the 'natives' regarded as an infringement of their cultural rights. Confrontations which arise out of such situations are an outcome of power abuse inherent in relations of domination and subjection<sup>8</sup>. This abuse of power was more than occasional or accidental. It defined how colonial power was sought to be structured in society, how the state made its presence felt in quotidian cultural practices, and how culture evolved as a field of contest in which cultural nationalism had its roots.

An order of the Governor-General in Council in 1854, reconfirmed in 1868, became the focus of such a cultural contest.<sup>9</sup> The point at issue was whether the 'natives' had a right to wear shoes in public places like government offices and judicial courts: 'the great shoe question', as a contemporary newspaper characterized it. The prohibition imposed by the order was questioned by the 'natives'. The controversy, which ensued, highlighted the cultural apprehensions of the 'natives' and their anxiety to preserve their tradition. Colonial rule, on the other hand, was keen on appropriating tradition for legitimizing its power and authority while at the same time. Privileging its own cultural practice as an ideal alternative.



## Uncovering the Feet: A Symbol of Respect

An immediate consequence of the government order was the fairly widespread incidence of friction during the transaction of official business between the lower echelons of the bureaucracy and the 'natives'. The former expected that the shoe regulation would be a means of ensuring the public demonstration of respect and submission to the power of colonial authority. The latter saw it as an infringement of human dignity and violation of religious sentiments. Both these perspectives were expressed in an incident at Surat on 24 March 1862 when the Judge of the *Faujdari Adalat* forbade Manockjee Cowasjee Entee, a Parsee and an assessor, from entering the court without removing his shoes.

An eyewitness account of the altercation between the Judge and Manockjee published in the *Bombay Gazette*, a pro-British newspaper, on 2 April 1862, was apparently a dramatized version of the incident.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, it appears to have captured all essential details of the incident, as Manockjee approvingly appended it to his memorial to Sir Bartle Frere. The Governor of Bombay, as an authentic narrative of what happened. The language and idiom in which the incident was reconstructed in the eyewitness account were themselves significant. They left no doubt about the relative position of power between the two: they confronted each other not as judge and assessor, but as one vested with authority and power and the other a subject pleading for his rights. The judge used the language of command and his demeanor was impatient and intimidating. He was not prepared to entertain any argument, either on law or on procedure, and insisted on unqualified compliance of his orders. Manockjee, on the contrary, used the language of a supplicant, registering his objections in a humble and submissive manner. It was a dialogue, if at all it can be termed a dialogue, conducted within the ambit of domination and subordination. The contrast is clear in the following exchange:

*Manockjee:* I humbly submit that exposing one's bare feet is something below human dignity and contrary to the sacred ordinances of our scriptures; besides, I have been bound over not to suffer myself the indignity of a pledge, which as long as it does not interfere with the laws, can be respected.

*Judge:* Nothing of that here. Take off your shoes or it will be the worse for you. The great Nawab of Sucheen just visited me, and I saw him taking off his shoes. Are you a greater man than him? *Manockjee:* I am only a poor British subject.

*Judge:* Then you do not obey our orders.

*Manockjee:* Your order I bow to with greater deference (Sahib ka Hookoom Humare Seer aur Ankho Par Hai) but your Honour will oblige by quoting the authority of some law.

*Judge:* Law! It is not a matter of law. Don't talk of laws here.



**Manockjee:** I respect your order with all the obedience but only on the understanding that by ordering me thus, you disgrace me, wound my feelings and interfere in the discharge of what I take to be a religious obligation.

**Judge:** I don't care. Beware you interrupt the courts\* business, and you will be dealt with accordingly. Do you obey us or no?"

Manockjee's refusal to comply with the order of the judge was based on three reasons. First, Parsees in other towns in the presidency were permitted to wear shoes while appearing in courts. Both the Supreme Court and *Sadar Adalat* in Bombay allowed it. Therefore, the judge at Surat was adopting a procedure at variance with the norms set by superior courts. This was directly linked to the second objection, which raised the question of provision in law on which the action of the judge was based. Claiming that he was a British subject, he insisted that the judge indicate some authority of law in support of his demand. To Manockjee the third objection was more important and fundamental. It related to his religious faith, which, according to him, did not permit walking with bare feet, not even in temples. Later, he collected the opinion of experts on Zoroastrianism in support of his contention and incorporated them in his memorial to the Governor.<sup>11</sup> He held that his religious tenets forbade all those practices which violated human dignity. As a consequence, Manockjee refused to comply with the order of the judge, as it would amount to a defiance of the dictates of his conscience, a violation of human dignity and a direct contradiction of his religious faith.

The judge, in turn, did not give much credence to the religious argument of Manockjee. Nor did he care what the courts in Bombay did. He claimed the power to decide what the local practice should be and asserted his right to exercise his authority by implementing the shoe regulation without any exception on religious or social grounds. When Manockjee persisted with his refusal to unshod, he was forced to discharge his duties as an assessor standing outside the court. To him, this indignity was preferable to a violation of his religious sensibilities.

In a memorial addressed to the governor of Bombay, Manockjee elaborated the objections he had raised during the altercation with the judge. The arguments he advanced were mainly political and religious in nature- the shoe regulation, he contended, was not in conformity with the liberal principles of British administration and a 'culpable violation of one of the most prominent rights guaranteed in the celebrated Proclamation of Her Gracious Majesty'. He said:

...the imperative enforcement of the custom of removing shoes is looked upon by all the various races that inhabit this country as an oppression incompatible with the mildness, forbearance, clemency and justice by which British rulers of India have rendered themselves so highly popular and endearing.<sup>12</sup>



Manockjee laid greater emphasis on religious objection. The Parsees, according to him, were required by their scriptures to cover the feet in all places.

...in accordance with the spirit of their religion the Parsees have, up to this date, never dispensed with the custom of wearing shoes (either at home or in public), in any country, though they have had, for a long time, to pass their days in contact with a bare-footed nation. The rigid covering of the feet is considered by them so essential an element of their faith, that even infants are made to use little slippers no sooner they learn to walk: a child who habitually shuns the wearing of the shoes will never have the ceremony of the sacred thread investiture performed unto him, until he gets inured to the practice of putting them on.<sup>13</sup>

The departure from this practice by Parsees in some parts of the country, he believed, was a result of the influence of Hindus and Muslims who did not have such a custom.

The Surat incident was not an isolated event, nor was it the first occasion when uncovering the feet had become a contentious issue.

### Antecedents

The British attitude towards the shoe question was influenced by their early experience in the *durbars* of Indian rulers. Whatever the initial reasons for the practice—cleanliness, convenience or respect—unshodding the feet before entering the presence of the rulers was invariably observed in the *durbars*. During the initial intercourse with Indian rulers, British merchants and officials- followed this practice without demur whenever they went to attend the Indian courts; they observed both the European and Indian practice, by taking off the hat and uncovering the feet.

The 'ceremony of taking off the shoes\* before entering the *darbar* was a part of the ritual demanded of the British resident's and agents at the Indian courts. The Indian rulers considered the ritual necessary to assert their authority, power, status and honour. At a time when the East India Company was soliciting trade privileges and struggling to acquire political power, its representatives thought it prudent to submit to these norms. But during the course of the nineteenth century, when the relative position of the British and Indian rulers changed, such practices became unacceptable to many British officials.

The British residents and agents were keen that their demeanour at the *durbars* reflect the political power which the East India Company had acquired vis-à-vis the Indian rulers during the first-half of the nineteenth century. After the Mughal emperor was accorded a pensionary status in 1803, the British tried to renegotiate its relationship with Indian rulers. An initial step in this direction was the appropriation of the prerogatives of paramountcy earlier exercised by the emperor. For instance, at the time of succession in Indian states, the governor-general invoked



the Mughal practice of conferring a *khillat* to symbolize imperial sanction.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the change in the political equation Indian rulers sought to maintain in their *darbars* rituals, which signified their superior status. The British residents and agents were required either to stand or squat on the floor in *darbars* and unshod their feet outside the audience hall. The British representatives were quite reluctant to concede to these demands, which often led to disputes and political impasse.<sup>15</sup> In 1833, Maharana Pratap Singh of Udaipur refused to receive the British agent unless he agreed to remove his shoes and sit on the floor. The agent was incensed that 'the representative of the British government should be subjected to a custom at variance with that of his own country and which puts him on equality with the lowest *mutsudees* in attendance on that chief'<sup>16</sup>. As in all such cases, the government counseled caution and respect for "native" tradition:

... it is the wish of His Lordship-in-Council that you should continue to observe the ceremony of taking off your shoes at the *darbars* of those sovereign chiefs who may expect it as this is the universal practice of the country which is submitted by the highest nobles of their courts and even by the chiefs themselves in their intercourse with one another<sup>17</sup>.

The practice was observed in almost all other courts as a part of etiquette, despite the resentment and objections raised by local officials. Some of them used various opportunities to discontinue the practice.

The experience of this custom perceived as a traditional practice seems to have been a decisive factor in setting the norms to be observed by the 'natives' during their intercourse with British officials. Initially, the occasion arose when 'native gentlemen' were invited to attend the governor-general's *darbar* or parties hosted by him. Invoking the custom followed in Indian courts, Lord Amherst, the governor-general during 1824-28, stipulated that Indians unshod their feet before entering his presence. However, it was not strictly followed and in fact was almost discontinued during the governor-generalship of William Bentinck. But Lord Dalhousie, under whom British colonialism assumed an aggressive face, formulated an official code regulating the use of shoes by the 'natives'. Accordingly, it was stipulated that 'all native gentlemen who may attend *darbar* either in the Government House or in Court, will conform with the native custom and will be required to leave their shoes at the door'. But in the case of entertainment parties, they were given the option to follow 'either the native or European custom'. If they chose the former, they were required to leave their shoes at the door. Instead, if they adopted the European custom and wore European shoes, it was not necessary to unshod<sup>19</sup>.

The regulation, although initially intended to apply only to the *darbar* of the governor-general, was soon adopted by the bureaucracy as what came to be known as 'shoe respect', in all government institutions in the British territory. Since some Indians challenged the legality of the extension of this practice to government



offices and courts, as Manockjee did at Surat. the scope of the regulation was made applicable to all official and semi-official occasions in which Indians appeared before the servants of the British government<sup>20</sup>.

*The Hindu Intelligencer*, a newspaper published from Calcutta, noticed that the decision of the government 'seriously agitated the native mind' and aroused 'no inconsiderable expression of indignation'.<sup>21</sup> Considering the regulation as discriminatory and insulting, many Indians chose to stay away from the *darbar* of the governor-general held immediately after the promulgation of the order. Prominent among them were Raja Pralap Chunder Sing, Baboo Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Hara Chunder Ghose Ram Gopal Ghose and Rama Prasad Roy. Krishna Mohan Banerji, a former member of the anglophile group 'Young Bengal' went to attend the *darbar*, but preferred to return home, rather than comply with the new regulation<sup>22</sup>. The uneasiness of the elite of Calcutta, who were part of the cultural world created by the British, was quite evident.

### Contested Tradition, Multiple Meanings

The public debate over the shoe regulation revolved around the question of tradition and its meaning. The British view was that Indians, regardless of religious differences, shared a common tradition of uncovering the feet in both private and public space. This, they held, was analogous to the European custom of taking off the hat<sup>23</sup>. In a letter to the Editor of *The Times of India*, one of them observed that,

In the eyes of all natives to wear shoes in a room in anyone's presence is a most studied insult, and as great a want of manners, as on the part of European gentlemen to remain with their heads uncovered.

Such a ritual, it was argued, was not confined to private intercourse, but was equally practised in public. The rulers of Rajputana, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the chiefs of Maharashtra and other rulers enforced the custom<sup>25</sup>.

In contrast to this the Indians who participated in the debate highlighted the plurality of tradition and argued that no uniform practice was followed by different communities. The Parsees claimed that shoes had formed a part of their dress for the last four thousand years and that they did not remove their shoes even when praying in temples<sup>25</sup>. This tradition was also respected when they visited the *darbar* of Indian rulers. Manockjee referred to the Parsees' audience with the princes of Kathiawar and Baroda who received them without the Parsees unshodding their feet<sup>27</sup>. When the Nizam of Hyderabad insisted that the *dustoor* of Poona remove his shoes at the court, the Parsee *dustoor* adopted an ingenious method to respect the religious prescription<sup>28</sup>. Manockjee, however, conceded that there were departures from this practice which he attributed to the influence of Hindus who 'believed it to be a great sin to take their shoes with them to consecrated spots, and are very particular about keeping them off when dining or performing religious ceremonies<sup>29</sup>. The colonial



rulers, the Parsecs contended, were trying to impose upon them a practice followed by other religious communities and certainly alien to Parsee tradition.

Apart from the differences about the plurality of tradition, the construction of its meaning also differed very sharply. While the British construed it as a practice expressive of respect similar to taking off the hat in western culture, no such meaning was attributed by Indians. *The Times of India* observed:

From time immemorial it has been the fashion of men of the western nations to show respect for each other by uncovering the head. No European gentleman, therefore, will enter a private house, court or public assembly without removing his hat: and this testimony of respect no well-bred Englishman dreams of withholding in the poorest native house, or native assembly he may enter. Equally certain is it—and let the fact be clearly borne in mind—that the immemorial custom of the East has been to show similar respect by uncovering the feet. The fact that Parsees as well as Hindus and Mahomedans, have ever been accustomed — to show respect for others in this way, sweeps away at once all the cobweb of religious stuff that has been imported on their part<sup>30</sup> it this controversy.

This interpretation of tradition was generally shared by those who justified the shoe regulation. One of them claimed that 'taking off the shoes as a mark of respect could be traced back for nearly 3,300 years among the civilized nations of the East<sup>31</sup>.' Since Indians had rendered this respect to their former rulers and fellow countrymen, there was no reason why it should not be extended to the British. They suspected that Indians were trying to take undue advantage of the liberality of the British which, in the light of the prevalence of the practice in the past, would tantamount to "studied insult"<sup>32</sup>. Hence no concession was possible.

Indians however, had an altogether different conception of the meaning of this tradition. According to them the expression of respect did not lie at the root of the practice. *The Hindu Intelligencer* asserted, "we have no such formality as uncovering the head or foot or any other part of the corporeal frame as a mark of respect due to another<sup>33</sup>. If practiced as a mark of respect, it would have been observed whenever people met each other, either in public or in private. This was not the case. In public meetings, notch parties and social functions people from different strata of society mingled without removing shoes<sup>34</sup>. The meaning attributed by the British it was argued, was out of ignorance of the manners and usages of Indians<sup>35</sup>.

What then did the practice mean? The Indians traced the practice to social and religious factors, which either influenced or prescribed a code of conduct. Unshodding before entering the *darbar* or a public function was seen as a 'sheer necessity' due to the 'peculiar style of living and furnishing<sup>36</sup>. On such occasions, since Indians sat on the floor, it was extremely uncomfortable to keep the footwear on. With chairs becoming popular, it was argued, the practice was increasingly dispensed with<sup>37</sup>.



Unshodding the feet within the domestic space had its rationale in the rules of pollution and purity prescribed by religious codes. Hindu houses generally have a sacred space within them, from which all polluting objects are kept away. Leather being polluting, leather footwear is left outside the house. At the same time Hindus had no objection to the use of wooden *Padukas* inside the house, 'carrying them in every nook and corner, whether sacred or not sacred'<sup>38</sup>.

These reasons led the opponents of 'shoe respect' to conclude that the practice of removing shoes, either in public or in private, as an expression of respect was alien to Indian traditions. It was, therefore, seen as 'a mark of humiliation, such as despots exact from their subjects, an intended insult and oppression.'<sup>39</sup> Such an impression was borne out by experience. A Parsee who went to the tent of a British army officer without removing his shoes was scolded and turned out: 'you big scoundrel, why did you come with your shoes to a gentleman's tent? Get out, you scoundrel'<sup>40</sup>. The pro-British newspapers used equally insulting language. Advocating stringent punishment to those who violated the 'shoe regulation', one of them stated:

The nigger who refuses to take off his shoes when so far honoured as to be permitted to present himself before a European gentleman *ought* to be slipped this is our solemn decree<sup>41</sup>.

Despite this aggressive racial attitude, Indians did not lose faith in British liberalism. A 'Hindu', writing in *The Times of India* bemoaned that 'such conduct may become Asiatic despots, but not the sons of one of the most civilized countries of the world and the advocates of liberty'<sup>42</sup>.

### **Culture, Legitimacy and Power**

The colonial rulers demanded 'shoe respect' as a traditional practice, justifying it as a continuation of custom rather than an innovation. The British were only claiming to partitpale in a traditional practice which was widely observed by rulers and subjects in the past. Such an appropriation of tradition, given (he cultural differences between the colonial rulers and the Indian subjects, lacked cultural authenticity.

In the indigenous tradition, cultural practices were part of community codes, shared and experienced within each community. The British were not a part of such traditions, and, more importantly, had their own codes of conduct, evolved in a different cultural milieu. Establishing an identity with indigenous tradition was part of a larger political project of an alien rule seeking legitimacy. However, this attempt only deepened the cultural distinctions between the British and Indians.

By permitting Indians to use European shoes and stockings, the British were valorizing their own cultural products and practices. The advocates of 'shoe regulation' tried to underplay the cultural implications of favouring the European



mode. *The Times of India*, for instance, disclaimed any intention to impose our fashions of dress upon our native subjects<sup>43</sup>. But the preferential treatment had its logic rooted in questions of hegemony and power. It tended to make the western fashion an increasingly enchanting norm for those whom Macaulay envisioned as the 'interpreters between us and them', furthering the process of colonial cultural hegemonization. The shoe regulation and its aftermath also indicate how both the appropriation of indigenous tradition and hegemonization through cultural practices were contested and resisted. The emergence of cultural nationalism in colonial India which sought to reclaim and regenerate indigenous cultural resources was partly embedded in such contestations.

## Appendix

The following is a narration of the altercation (in Hindoostani) between Mr. Warden, Sessions Judge, and Mr. Manockjee Cowasjee Entee. Assessor, in the Court of the Surat Fouzdarec Adawlat on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of March 1862. *Court Peon: Shett*, take off your boots. *Manockjee*: Oh! No.

*Peon*: Everybody takes off his shoes here. *Manockjee*: Never mind; tell your sahib I shan't. *Sherisiedur 10 the Judge*: That Parsee objects to take off his shoes. *Judge*: He must take them off. Everybody does so. *Judge turning to Manockjee*: Come, take off your shoes soon. *Manockjee*: Very good sir, but let your Honour hear the objections I have against it and then decide.

*Judge*: You are very disputatious. Have you come here to wrangle with me? I shan't hear anything.

*Manockjee*: No. Sir, whatever is legal ought to be heard.

*Judge*: No, nothing of law herein. You interrupt the court's business, and you shall have to suffer for it.

*Manockjee*: I respectfully submit I do not interrupt the court's business; order me to step in, and I shall be very happy to do so.

*Judge*: Take your shoes off and get in.

*Manockjee*: I humbly submit that exposing one's bare feet is something below human dignity, and contrary to the sacred ordinances of our scriptures: besides, I have been bound over not to suffer myself the indignity of a pledge, which, as long as it does not interfere with the laws, can be respected.

*Judge*: Nothing of that here. Take off your shoes or it will be the worse for you. The great Nawab of Sucheen just visited me, and I saw him taking off his shoes. Are you a greater man than him?

*Manockjee*: I am only a poor British subject.

*Judge*: Then you do not obey our orders.



*Manockjee:* Your order I bow to, with the greater deference (saheb ka hookoom humare seer or ankho par hai) but your Honour will oblige by quoting the authority of some law.

*Judge:* Law! It is not a matter of law. Don't talk of laws here.

*Manockjee:* I wonder why I should not. But then I have another very legal objection to raise. I am informed that the Criminal Procedure Act provides that the summons should be issued to the assessors at least three days before their presence is required, but I received no such summons. A peon of the court called upon me yesterday (Sunday) asking me to present myself before the court without even mentioning what I was wanted for. This, if I mistake not, is not in accordance with the laws. My presence, therefore, not being legal, I shall be excused today.

*Judge:* No. I know you do not like serving as an assessor and hence this trifling with the court. You have been summoned just the same as others here. We are not to make a new rule here for you. You interrupt the business of the court, and you will suffer for it. I order you to take off your shoes at once and get in.

*Manockjee:* I respect your order with all the obedience but only on the understanding that by ordering me thus, you disgrace me, wound my feelings and interfere in the discharge of what I take to be a religious objection.

*Judge:* I don't care. Beware you interrupt the court's business, and you will be dealt with accordingly. Do you obey us or no?

*Manockjee:* No, sir. I do not interrupt the court's business. I just await your orders to step in.

*Judge:* Come, let us see how you get in with shoes.

*Manockjee:* No, sir, of course not until you allow me to do so.

*Judge:* Do you take off your shoes or no? Say yes or no.

*Manockjee:* I humbly submit that as long as your Honour do not overrule my religious scruples and show me a law whereby your orders could be justified, I am very sorry I could not act in defiance of the dictates of my conscience, in defiance of human dignity and in direct contradiction of my religion.

*Judge:* No. You tell us an untruth, your religion does forbid it. You see some Parsees here in the court, just refer the question to them.

*Manockjee:* No, sir. I tell you the simple truth, as far as I know, our religion does forbid this and similar personal indignities. As for the Parsees here, the court may ask them, but everybody is not expected to know our religion.



*Judge:* You represent untruthfully. Whom would you wish us to refer? You make yourself liable to punishment.

*Manockjee:* I beg your pardon, I believe I am quite right. Whatever the law provides I shall, with all due obedience, undergo.

*Judge:* Just name somebody here.

*Manockjee:* I could not.

*Judge:* Then who could?

*Manockjee:* The court if it likes.

*Judge:* But you tell us an untruth—there is no religious objection. I know that.

*Manockjee:* No, sir, I believe there is, and I speak the truth only.

*Judge:* Do I lie, then? Come, sharp, take care and say whom would you have us ask?

*Manockjee:* I could name no one. Very few have rightly studied our sacred scriptures. Besides, you are aware, sir, that we are allowed to go, with shoes on into the Supreme Court, the *Sudar Adawlut* and every where in Bombay: and if it were disrespectful they would never have permitted it there.

*Judge:* Talk not of Bombay. Every Parsee takes his shoes off before us and I command you at once to submit to the rule of the court.

*Manockjee:* No, sir, I have religious objections against it.

*Judge:* That we know not.

*Manockjee:* But then I do humbly inform the court it is so.

*Judge:* (excited) Stand off, not so near.

*Manockjee:* Very good, your Honour.

*Judge:* I order you at once to take off your shoes.

*Manockjee:* No, sir, not until you say you overrule my religious objections and care not wounding my feelings as a man.

*Judge:* Name somebody for us to refer to.

*Manockjee:* None in Surat that I know of.

*Judge:* What, no one knows your religion?

*Manockjee:* No, sir, none that I know of.

*Judge:* Not even the Dustoors and the score-and-half of Modees?

*Manockjee:* No, sir, there is no more than one Modee whom the panchayat used to refer to the former times and he is merely a repository of all our customs and usages. He knows nothing of our sacred writings.

*Judge:* Name anybody.



*Manockjee:* I believe the son of Eduldaroo of Sunjan, now one of the Dustoors of Bombay and all who are equal to him may answer and solve question. If you take it no indignity, I am prepared to lake my turban off provided you allow me to have my skullcap on.

*Judge:* What! What! Do you talk of taking your pugree away? Why, I could not sit with mine on, nor could any person here dare take off his pugree? Do you condemn the court?

*Manockjee:* No, sir, I just asked if that would suit the court. Taking off my pugree would have been a greater insult to myself than to the court, but I would have submitted to it because there is nothing of conscience or religion involved in it. I hold no respect, or disrespect, embodied or disembodied in the shoes, but the putting on of our turban is the greatest of all respects that we pay. We do not have our pugrees on when at home, but when we go out to see respectable persons we are bound by social etiquette to have it on: whilst we (Parsees) in our social intercourse never take off our shoes before any Parsee, however great. In fact the 'abroo' said to lie in shoes is a very novel, strange idea with us.

*Judge:* We do not know of that.

*Manockjee:* Your Honour may enquire. Besides.

*Judge:* Stop; go out of the court at once.

*Manockjee:* Very good, sir. (Turns and leaves the court)

*Judge :* No, No, No, come back: stand there. Look here, I shall not allow you a chair, you are to stand there and hear the proceedings.

*Manockjee:* Any indignity I shall submit to provided human dignity is not violated and my religious feelings not meddled with. I shall stand. (After a short pause, to the *sheristedar*) Ask your saheb what is the duty of an assessor.

*Judge:* You talk of the Supreme Court and the *sudar* and still you know not what an assessor is!

*Manockjee:* We are not expected to have studied law previous to our coming here, and besides, jurymen and assessors have not equal powers. I am told. (The judge explains at length the difference between the jurors and the assessors. Manockjee (hanks him in return.)

*Judge:* (After the deposition of the first witness was half taken) If you like to sit you could come in without your shoes and there is a chair for you. If you like staying our of the court, you may sit on the floor.

*Manockjee:* No sir, I feel much troubled in refusing your kind offer of a chair, as I could not take off my boots. As for sitting on the bare floor, it is merely adding to the disgrace. If you Honour would allow me any seat whatever, say a *guddee*, I shall be very happy to accomodate myself upon it, but....



*Judge:* Enough, Enough - If you do not want a chair you shan't have it.

*Manockjee:* Very good, sir.

an Eye Witness

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9. Foreign Dept, 22 December 1854, nos 263-65 and Home Dept, Public Branch, 4 April 1968. no. 23.
10. For the text of the 'eye-witness account', see appendix.
11. Manockjee collected the opinion of authorities like Dr Martin Haugh, Dhunjeebhoy Framjee Dustoor Hosungjee Jamasjee, and also evidence from religious texts. Dhunjeebhoy Fraijee stated that 'the religious books of the Parsees most emphatically prohibit them from walking barefooted. To cover their feet is not only an immemorial custom with the Parsees, but it is a positive religious firman (commandment)' Manockjee Cowasjee Entee, *Memorial to Sir Bartle Frere*, the Governor of Bombay. 5 June 1862. Appendix A (hereafter *Memorial*).
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23. The notion of such a homology was very widely shared by those who favoured shoe respect. One of them wrote: 'The European custom on entering a person's house is to take off the hat; the Asiatic custom is to take off the shoes; and this custom is as invariable in India as taking off the hat in England', *The Times of India*, 11 April 1862. Also see *Bombay Gazette*, 14 November 1856.
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28. When the dustoor of Poona went to the court of Nizam, he was instructed to remove his shoes. Since he was keen on meeting the Nizam he used 'the inconvenient and clumsy method of placing the *mahajam* (a piece of leather used inside the shoe and as large as the shoe itself) between the naked soles of his feet and the stockings. *The Times of India*, 11 April 1862
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# PARADIGMS LOST - NOTES ON SOCIAL HISTORY IN INDIA

**S. Bhattacharya**

An attempt is made in this paper to identify the dominant paradigms in the historiography of the society in modern India. A brief survey of the early developments in the area of social historiography is followed by an enquiry into the organizing principles and implicit assumptions prevalent in different phases of the growth of the discipline.

Its aim is not the itemisation of titles published or substantive contributions, but to offer an interpretation of the dominant trends in the hope that it may lead to a critical social history of the discipline of social history. It argues that the task of confronting social history with itself merits attention.

Social History seems to be in need of a definition, unlike, let us say, political or economic history. Social historians are plagued with this problem more than others partly because the discipline has arrived late on the scene: there is, indeed, a view shared by a good number of historians that it is not an independent discipline or field of study. Even those social scientists who operationally concede its existence as a field of study tend far too often to treat it as residual category; it is assumed that what is left over after political and economic historians have staked their claims is the preserve of the social historian. This was at one time a feature of the British historiographic tradition, which has had an overwhelming influence on Indian historical studies. Thus, G.M. Trevelyan offered a definition which may now be considered obsolete but was widely-accepted for a generation: Social history is the "history of a people with politics left out" [Trevelyan, 1994 pVII]. Till the 1950s the majority of Indian historians, interested primarily in 'political history' would consider their job well-done, if they appended to their monograph a penultimate chapter on social conditions which would cover diverse topics such as manners, customs, food and drinks, costume, caste order, education system, position of women, daily life etc. While these and other subjects subsumed under social history were not trivial in themselves, it is their discretist treatment in isolation, which trivialized them. Even this concession to 'history with politics left' out was commoner in works of ancient and medieval history than in works on the modern period

In contrast economic history, especially of the modern period, developed much earlier. Hobsbawm has pointed out that 'social history' began its career in Europe in combination with economic history and the "economic half was overwhelmingly preponderant. There were hardly any social histories of equivalent caliber to set beside the numerous volumes devoted to economic history", till the 1950s[Hobsbawm, 1971]. This is also true of India, though for reasons altogether different. It was not so much, in our opinion, autonomous developments within the



disciplines concerned, nor the earlier acceptance of history, economics and economic history (as 'Indian economics') as subjects taught in Indian universities-though these factors did play a role. The early birth of economic history as an intellectual concern was due to the fact that the historical context of Indian economic problems, viz, the colonial pattern contrasting the advanced capitalist metropolis could not be ignored. M.G.Ranade is the best exemplar of this. "The political domination of one country by another attracts far more attention than the more formidable, though unfelt domination which the capital, enterprise, and skill of one country exercise over the trade and manufactures of another"[Ranade, 1892; 1916,p92]. Ranade suggested that along with this domination. There is an intellectual domination, that of the ideas of 'political economy' evolved in England which pretended to offer "one set of general principles [which] hold good every where for all times and places"(op cit p4). Ranade, therefore, looked towards another intellectual tradition, that of the historical economists, especially those of Germany. He refers to August comte ("the first who denied the name of science to the doctrines taught by the deductive school" and to elaborate "the historical method of research"): Ranade also cited the contemporary German economists like "Raw, Knies, Roscher, Hildebrand, Wanger and others" who elaborated "the historical view". "The method to be followed is not the deductive but the historical method which takes account of the past in its forecast the future; and relativity, and not absoluteness, characterizes the conclusions of economical science"(opcit 21). In general, economic nationalism nurtured an interest in the questions of growth and backwardness in the context of colonial-metropolitan relations which raised basically historical questions contrary to the inclinations of the neo-classical school [ed Bipan Chandra, 1966; BN Ganguli, 1974]. This continued to be a trend in Indian economic thinking, even if the digits of discourse were different after the growth of a body of professional economists in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, professional sociologists arrived late on the intellectual scene. In the nationalist phase of Indian intellectual development their presence was not conspicuous. Further, social anthropology as it was first introduced in India was in a sense a part of the ideological apparatus that was linked with a colonization process. J.P.S.Uberoi in his manifesto for 'swaraj in science' cites a very perceptive comment of Levi-Strauss that anthropology has been the outcome of a historical process that made the larger part of mankind subservient "Anthropology is daughter to this era of violence"[Levi-Strauss 1966, cited in Uberoi, 1968]. Uberoi also points to a colonialism in the realm of idea and cites Nirmal Kumar Bose: "The position of Indian anthropology has on the whole, been colonial in relation to Schools which have dominated the European and American scene from time to time"[Bose, 1963 cited in Uberoi 1968]. A.K Saran and Ram Krishna Mukherjee have also under scored this dependency as a feature of Sociology in India [saran, 1958; Mukherjee 177]. Mukherjee [opcit p42] finds that only the first generation of Indian sociologists did not indulge in repetition of the so called western theoretical formulations" and as we shall see later, their work did show a sense of the historical contrast to the later generation of sociologists.



The traditions of English historiography have, for better or for worse; strongly influenced the study of Indian history and in England social history as an independent discipline emerged very late. As late as 1962 a leading English social historian writes: "Judged by the usual criteria of academic disciplines, it can scarcely be said to exist: there are no chairs and, if we omit local history, no university departments, no learned journals, and few if any textbooks". [HJPerkin in HP R Finberg, ed 1962 p61]. This offers a contrast to the flourishing continental tradition in social history. However, this does not mean that the history of English society was an uncultivated and barren field; it was not, till very recently, fenced off as a specialization field. To understand why social history did not develop under British auspices in colonial India one has to turn to other possible explanations.

One major factor was perhaps the fact that the British historians, who set the pace, preferred to write not so much about India nor even about British India-but about the British in India. The emphasis throughout the nineteenth century was on the process of British expansion and consolidation and it was the study of administrative structures and policies, which provided an incommensurable and unaccommodating framework for whatever little work that there was on the indigenous society. The best exemplar of this tradition were the editors and authors of the celebrated "Cambridge History of India" series (1922-1953). Thus the fifth volume entitled "British India" contained not a single chapter on any social historical theme [H Dodwell, 1929]. As Eric Stokes has pointed out, the British historians' interest was focused on the activities of the British as the actors on the stage of history with India as a shadowy background [Stokes in CH Phillips (Ed) 1961]. When the colonial historian turned to social history, he concentrated attention on British Social life in India. The early volume of the first historical journal in India, "British: past and present", are replete with studies in this genre. The most well known work of; this genre is not a history at all but a compilation. Viz WH Carey's "Good Old Days Of John Company". (1882-87), which contained "curious reminiscences illustrating manners and customs ;of the British in India" from 1600 to 1858. Some distinguished professional contributions in this area in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were HH Dowell's on the nabobs of Madras [1926] TGPSpear's on the nabobs in northern India [1951] and Dennis Kincaid's [1938] popular account of British social life in India in the period 1608 to 1930s.

While this disinterest in India's social history characterized 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial historiography in general (a notable exception was the work of Sir Alfred Lyall, 1882) there existed a prior tradition of a different kind: the late 18<sup>th</sup> century 'discovery' of Hinduism through the investigation of Sir William Jones, NR Halhead, JZ Holwell, A Dow and others. Here was the tradition from which originated Indological studies later to be enriched by Max Muller and others, [see R Thaper, 1975 and Dumont, 1966]. But these early Indologists were not actually oriented to what we can call social history despite their interest in the Hindu civilization. As



PJ Marshall [1970] has pointed out, they "did not try to understand what Hinduism meant to millions of Indians. They invariably made a distinction between 'popular' Hinduism which they did not deem worthy of study and 'philosophical' Hinduism". In striking contrast a Frenchman, Abbe Jean Antoine Dubois [1816, English edition 1906], addressed himself to the reality of Indian social life. A year after Dubois' work came James Mill's "History of British India" [1817] and this work, in the tradition of the contextual study of Hinduism, was responsible for many of the stereotypes and prejudices which characterized 19<sup>th</sup> century British attitude to Indian society [of GD Bence, 1961].

There was however a third tradition the ethnographic researches, which redeemed to a great extent the poverty of British intellectual response to India's social history. This was mainly a late 19<sup>th</sup> century development, though in the socio-economic surveys of Buchanan-Hamilton [RM Martin, 1838, Buchanan-Hamilton, 1807, 1833], of Ward and Connor (largely unpublished, MS in India Office Library) and others and in the early gazetteers of W Hamilton [1820] and E Thronton [1854] a beginning had been made. There are broadly speaking three categories of work in this genre. Some investigations were generated in connection with census operations which started in 1872 and in a systematic fashion from 1881. Second there were various reports, not all of which were published, on local socio economic history generated by revenue settlement operations [Baden-Powell, 1892, provided a magisterial survey]. Third, there were the castes and tribes series representing contemporary European interest in ethnography compiled by Sir Denzil Ibbetson [1883] JC Nesfield [1885], H Risley [1891] W Crooke [1896], E Thurston [1909], R V Russell [1916] and others. It is not our purpose to itemise these ethnographic compilations. While these works suffered, as Barney Cohn [Cohn and Singer, 1968] and AM Shah [1974] have pointed out from the limitations derived from contemporary anthropological theories particularly the "pseudo-history of both the evolutionist and diffusionist varieties" [AM Shah, loc cit] they provide, in so far as they accurately recorded data now irretrievably lost, material for the social historian.

We have confined ourselves till now to the mainstream of Anglo-Indian historiography and its tributaries, the indological and ethnographic traditions, all fed by the inexhaustible energies of the nineteenth century empire builders. What was the extent of Indian participation? The establishment of the Bengal Social Science Association in 1859 almost contemporaneous with the earliest sociological association the British National Association for the promotion of social sciences [1857] and the various enterprises in sociological enquiry initiated by a number of voluntary societies, involved substantial Indian participation. This has been recently chronicled by Dutt Gupta [1972, Chapters III-V: she does not however refer to similar enterprises outside Bengal e.g. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha's Social Surveys and publications]. While this was admittedly at an amateur level, there were also



Indians professionally committed and employed as such in the ethnographic survey enterprises: eg Hiralal Associated with Russel [1916] in his work on Central India, Rangachari associated with Thurston [1909] in the compilation on South India. L.K. A.Iyer [1902-12] who worked on Cochin tribes and castes. Unfortunately little seems to be known about these pioneers, It was in 1919-20 that one could say that sociology, or more accurately social anthropology, as a discipline enters the Indian intellectual scene with the foundation of the first Indian department of sociology in the University of Bombay and the first sociological journal, the *Indian Journal of Sociology* (Baroda). Earlier, sociology was being taught in the University of Calcutta, possibly from 1908, and of Bombay, from 1914, but the chair in a department of sociology at Bombay, occupied first by Patrick Geddes, marked the beginning of a body of professionals with institutional moorings. In the next quarter of a century a number of sociologists produced works oriented towards social history, viz G.S.Ghurye, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, K.P. Chattopadhyay, D.P. Mukherji and others. Some historians would possibly be of the view that some of the historical investigations of these pioneers can be read with profit even today: eg B.K.Sarkar's on folk history and culture [1917] which was sadly neglected by professional historians, D.P. Mukerji's on the Indian elite (1948) G.S Ghuryes on old religious symbols and modern politics, [1962]. Sociologists, however, seem to differ rather strongly in their evaluation of this historical interest, A.M. Shah [1974] in a trend report for the ICSSR is highly critical of "the continuing influence of history, including pseudo history of the evolutionist and diffusionist varieties, in the works of pioneers of sociology and anthropology in India, such as LKA Iyer, S.Roy, Brajendranath, Seal, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Radhakamal Mukherjee, D.P. Mukerji, K.P. Chattopadhyaya and G.S Ghurye". On the other hand another eminent sociologist, Ramakrishna Mukherjee [1977] in his trend report for International Sociological Association, is not at all scared of the; dragon of pseudo-history threatening the muse of sociology; the report by A.M Shah" on historical sociology has become fragmentary with hardly any history or sociology in it". For it is vitiated by a "basically a - historical approach", that of the structural-functionalists [R Mukherjee, 1977,p77]. Without getting deeper into the quarrels with in the sociologists tribe, it suffices for; historians to note that in the 1950 the sociologists, begin to turn away from historical questions under the Influence of the approach Mukherjee has mentioned. The possibilities of fruitful co-operation between sociologists and historians, particularly in the area of modern Indian history, were allowed to atrophy. This was particularly unfortunate because the Indian historians' interest in social history at this time was confined, by and large, to pre-British India. Historians 'approach to modern Indian social history consisted of banal eulogies of the so-called renaissance and social reform movements [e.g. HC F Zacharias, 1933;KK Datta, 1950] and tangential treatment of "social conditions" as appendage to works on administrative and economic; history, [eg KK Datta, 1936: HR Ghoshal, 1950; NK Sinha, 1956]. Up to the middle of the century, so far as modern social history is concerned, professional historians were liable to frame their problematic



in the manner in which DP Mukherji [1948], AR Desai [1948] or Nirmal Kumar Bose [1949] did within the tradition of sociology and anthropology.

From the beginning of the 1950s there began on the one hand what we may call the de-historiasation of the Indian sociologists interests and on the other a spurt of development in social historiography. The number of such works published between 1950-65 was quite impressive. In the area of social policies and ideas Kenneth Ballhatcet [1957] made a detailed study of early 19<sup>th</sup> century western India, Eric Stokes, [1959] on utilitarian premises of social and economic policies, M.N.Das [1959] on social and economic policies of the pre-Mutiny years, and A.F.Ahmed [1965] in early 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. In the area of social reform movements, the impact of missionary activities, role of nationalists in social reform etc., Kenneth Ingham [1956], S.Natarajan [1959] and C.H. Heimasath [1964] contributed on the 19<sup>th</sup> century K.K.Dutta (1996) and V.P.S.Raghuvanshi investigated the eighteenth century background; B.B. Misra [1961] provided a wide ranging social history of the middle class; and E Shils. [1961] Published an extremely influential work on Indian intellectuals laying the conceptual basis of later historical investigations by the Cambridge School. The so-called Bengal renaissance attracted a host of the authors. The economist D.H.Gadgil [1959] laid the basis of historical study of the sociology of entrepreneurship an area soon to attract many historians. Above all, a significant sign that social history had finally arrived was the foundation of the ;Indian Economic and Social History Review; in 1963, with the declared aim of "representing three disciplines relevant to the study of socio-economic history: history economics and sociology (IESHR 1963 editorial statement).

The hyphenation of social and economic history above and the emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach was not without significance. There had occurred in the 1950s a disjunction between the historians and sociologists concerns. According to Saberwal this was in part due to the influence of contemporary British social anthropology which "may fairly be called anti-historical". And in part because the historical interests promoted by the American tradition were confined to a species of cultural history which missed out on "historical experience of the middle range; the rise of capitalism, the colonial expansion and its consequences, and the meaning of industrialism or of a lack thereof [saberwal, 1979,p247; also see R., Mukherjee, 1977,pp44-46]. In the late 1960s however, this a - historical style of thinking and the trend of the 1950s began to weaken. The exhortation by Dumont [1964] in the pace setting journal, Contributions to Indian Sociology, to study 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century history to advance one's understanding of contemporary Indian society, or the conspicuous cross disciplinary emphasis in the influential Cohn and Singer volume, "Structure and Change in Indian Society"[1968] were some straws in the wind. Be the extent to which in the study of modern Indian social history cross-fertilization across disciplinary boundaries took place from the 1960s will be one of the questions worth investigating.



At this point in this cursory over-view of the development of social history we may usefully try to identify the dominant paradigms in the historiography of Indian social history. We use the term 'paradigm' here in preference to the term 'model' for the simple reason that the exactitude that model, building demands (measurability and predictability of relationship between variables) is unknown in social historiography. The use of the notion of paradigm does not, of course, imply that Thomas Kuhn's [1962] well-known thesis applied in detail to the development of a social science discipline. Indeed, one may differ with the Kuhn thesis on a number of issues (what is more Kuhn has worked under a self imposed limitation that prevents him from enquiring into the broader changes in; the social context leading to 'paradigmatic' revolutions). Kuhn's thesis is relevant here in terms of the questions, he raises regarding the so-called cumulative progress of science, rather than in terms of the answers he provides.

The variety of research problems, an aversion to wider questions beyond the immediate empirical limits, and the sheer volume of historian's output make the identification of the central trends over time a difficult task. Social historians in India have generally tended to regard their problems in a discretist fashion and thus they write monographs on infanticide in British India or Muslim manners and customs or entrepreneurship in business caste, or urban leadership in a metropolitan city, etc. In works of this genre there is little or no attempt on the part of the historian to locate his individual work in relation to a wider interpretative framework of the historical processes of which a part is under his scrutiny. This of course does not mean that there is no such framework. It is there in the shape of implicit assumptions.

If one takes a long-term view of the trends embodied in the works of historians of modern India one begins to see convergent patterns of thinking. Without postulating a conscious choice of an interpretative framework by the individual historians, one may suggest that social historical thinking has not been without certain organising principles.

The organizing principle that held sway throughout the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the paradigm of progression towards European civil and political society; the guiding hand of the British led India on this path; education combined with filtration to the lower orders of society and implantation of such civil and political institutions as the British thought fit to give to India, slowly propelled India on this path to progress. This paradigm of the pupil's progress was not only an integral part of British bureaucratic thinking (enshrined in a statute, requiring the Indian Government to submit regularly 'Moral and Progress Report but also of respectable ideological lineage. On the one hand Benthamite and utilitarian philosophy ascribed to British rule a civilizing mission; on the other hand, the idea of progress leading by stages to the policy and; society of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe was a cornerstone of the outlook of pioneers in sociology, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. Comte



emphasized an evolutionary scheme for the historical explication of the emergence of 19<sup>th</sup> century European civilization as much as Herbert Spencer. Both had a formative influence in 19<sup>th</sup> century India [S Bhattacharya, 1974]. Spencer defined sociology as a natural history of society concerned with the "history of the transformations through which it has passed" His comparative method led to the view that social evolution was invariably towards the modern complex European society [B Dutt Gupta, 1972 chVI; G.D.Bearce, 1961]. Edward Burnett Tyler's evolutionist views also pointed to the same direction. Finally, Sir Henry Maine's contributions in historical jurisprudence underlined a lesson implicit in the evolutionist view, that India's was a stagnant society, which incorporated a "great part of our own [European] civilization with its elements not yet unfolded"[Maine, 1876 cited Metcalf 1965 p322]. To this trend of thinking Social Darwinism, prevalent in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain added a racist tinge

This is the intellectual milieu that gave birth to the 'pupil's progress' paradigm. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century James Mill in his celebrated "History of British India"[1817] had with high Benthamite fervor, inveighed ad infinitum against the degenerate and backward Indian society, particularly at the point of time when British political authority began to be established; many of the stereotypes which the 19<sup>th</sup> century British authors carried in their mind originated with Mill's obiter dicta (frequently ill-informed, as H.H. Wilson painstakingly demonstrated in later editions). In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the intellectual predilections outlined above were reinforced by Anglo-Indian racial prejudice of the post-Mutiny period. The most typical expression of the new attitude in historical works is to be found in the works of Sir William Hunter, a civil servant who became the editor of the first complete set of Gazetteers of India and virtually the recognized official historian. In his first historical work, "The Annals of Rural Bengal"[1868], he admirably set out his plan: "My business is with the people". At the same time the 'lesson of history' that he underlined was clear: the superior civilization had triumphed and had put the governed state back on the track of progress. "I have depicted the state of rural Bengal when it passed into our hands; and most educated Englishmen know sufficient of its present condition to have some perception of the difference. To any one who questions the benefits of British rule, especially if he be a native of India, I can only say, Si Monumentum requires circumspice"[Hunter, 1868, p189]. The same attitude informed another notable contemporary's work, Sir Richard Temple's "India in 1880" [1881] which paid more than usual attention to the social aspects of changes effected by the plastic touch of western civilization". A few years later a more strident expression of similar views was provoked by the Ilbert Bill agitation: The British government, wrote Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, "does not represent the native principles of life or of government, and it can never do so until it represents heathenism and barbarism. It represents a belligerent civilization." [Metcalf 1965, p 318]. These strident tones of mid-Victorian imperialism get somewhat muted by the end of century. The tutelage was being questioned, the pupils were getting



restive. Nevertheless, one hears echoes of these tones as late as 1925 in the writings of the first "professor of the history and culture of the British dominions in Asia" in what was then known as school of oriental studies, London. For five hundred years the process of "influence and penetration of European ideas" in Indian society has been impeded by "reactive forces" (exemplified by the Mutiny and "Mr. Gandhi's non-co-operations" movement)"When new influences began to work, when the environment underwent modification, it was long before these could overcome the inertia of so great a mass of humanity as inhabits the sub-continent of India. Even then the great mass has always tended powerfully to revise into its old posture, like rock which you try to lift with levels" [Dowell 1925,p315]. One may finally compare with the foregoing LSSO'Malley's survey in 1941 of the inaction of the civilizations of India and the West. "India has reached a point at which she may soon have to decide for herself how far the impact of western civilization is to carry her"[Meston, in O'Malley(ed) 1941,p iv]. A tame end for a belligerent civilization.

In fact an alternative to the paradigm of 'pupil's progress' had evolved by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that of "national awakening". With the intensification and extension of the nationalist spirit the guiding hand of the rulers was looked upon with suspicion, but the goals themselves remained unquestioned. Thus the alternative paradigm did not constitute a complete break with Anglo-Indian historiography tradition which held up progress towards the European model as the goal. That architectonic vision of modern history remained deeply entrenched in the syllabi and every aspect of formal teaching (except for the marginal institutions with ideals of 'national education') On a smaller scale-and research works of necessity are on a smaller scale the detailed scholarly work by professional historians implicitly accepted and derived their significance from the same vision.

The essential features of the 'national awakening' paradigm are that (1) it presents the recipients are of western ideas and institutions as active agents of change rather than as passive recipients (which is how they are viewed in the earlier chronicles of the pupil's progress);(2) it compares and often equates a 'renaissance' in India, especially Bengal, with the European Renaissance; and (3) it links growth of political consciousness to the cultural and social changes in 19<sup>th</sup> century India in a way irreconcilable with the pupil's progress paradigm.

The new model Indian history developed in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in its development the 19<sup>th</sup> century participants in the so called Bengal renaissance had no share. It is interesting to observe that as early as 1880 Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya uses the term 'renaissance' and consciously makes a comparison between the European renaissance experience and a 'renaissance in Bengal; but by Bengal renaissance he meant something altogether different from the later stereotype. It meant the age of Chaitanya, Raghunath, Raghunandan, Vidyapati, Chandidas etc. [Chattopadhiya, 1954,II p339]. Or, for instance,



M.G.Ranade applied the analogy of renaissance to the reformation of "Aryan religion, social polity", after recovery from the shock of invasion by "barbarian Scythian conquerors"(Jagirdar, 1963,p64]. In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the concept 'renaissance', acquired the new connotation in the Indian context, the connotation familiar to us.C.F.Andrews wrote his well-known work "Renaissance in India" in 1912, Surendranath Banerjee paid homage to the pioneers of 'national awakening' in his "A Nation in Making", [1925], Bipin Chandra Pal wrote a historical account of "the New Age in Bengal (Nabajuger Bangla)", HCF Zincharias published "Renascent India" in 1933. By the middle of the century the paradigm of renaissance or awakening passed into the stock of stereotypes of history textbooks, e.g.KKDatta "Dawn of Renascent India [1950]. The quintessential textbook by R.C. Majumdar,KK.Datta and H.C.Raychaudhury[1946-50] displays all the basic features of the new paradigm replacing the old. While it concedes the role of English education and "liberal ideas of the West" it is emphasized that social change and reform comes about because English rulers "co-operate with advanced Indian reformers"(p82). As in Europe the renaissance is said to be the divide between"medieval' and 'modern' ages; A "critical outlook on the past and new aspiration for the future marked the new awakening. Reason and judgment took the place of faith and belief; superstition yielded to science: immobility was replaced by progress, and a zeal for reform of proved abuses over powered age-long apathy and inertia and a complacent acquiescence in whatever was current in society"(p812). Finally again very typically, there is suggested a continuity between the political ideology of the nationalist movement and the consciousness that emerged with the so-called renaissance," In the field of Indian politics also, Raja Ram Mohan was the prophet of the new age. He laid down the lines for political agitation in constitutional manner which ultimately led to the birth of the Indian National Congress half a century later"(p813). Works by R.C.Majumdar [1967]. N.S.Bose [1969] B.B.Majumdar[1934,1967]KK.Datta [1950] particularly emphasized the element of continuity in political consciousness.

The approach outlined above to begin with was a part of the ideological struggle to exercise the colonial hold over the Indian mind. A new definition of national identity was attempted and the writing of history had a major role to play in this process. "The most significant question facing the historian of the time [in British India], namely, the understanding of the historical aspects of the backwardness of the present, tended to be ignored. The ancient period became the golden age. In order to emphasise the national unity of India since the earliest time, generalisations were made on the history of the subcontinent, essentially from the perspective of the Ganges valley. Critical opinion on India was sought to be countered by proving that the liberal values in fashion in Britain were all available in the Indian cultural and political past. Thus kingship in ancient India was seen as a kind of constitutional monarchy, forgetting that such an interpretation was anachronistic. Interest in social history tried to justify the caste structure". [R.Thapar. 1975,p.16-17). Ancient Indian



historiography in particular was rife with stereotypes which arose" from Indian national sentiments opposed to the nature of imperial rule and seeking justification in the reading of the past.... The more persistent of the stereotypes have dominated not only historical interpretation but have become the foundation of modern political ideologies" [Thaper, p4]. So far as the study of modern Indian social history is concerned, the above tendency manifested itself in a shift of emphasis away from the role of the foreign government in introducing social reforms to the active role of indigenous institutions and individual social reformers; away from the evangelical values and Victorian British liberalism which promoted reformism to what was sought to be established as original Hindu values rediscovered, away from the history that ascribed a dependent and loyal role to an English educated elite to the ascription of a politically conscious nationalistic role to an intelligentsia struggling to push forward the nation on social and political and economic fronts. This new approach, initially put forward in the writing of political ideologues and incorporated later in the professional historians works had a positive role to play in providing a framework for a reassessment of social and cultural changes in modern times. However, this national awakening/renaissance' paradigm did not go far enough in breaking with the tradition of colonial historiography. The 19<sup>th</sup> century ideals of progress and enlightenment and reform are carried over and subsumed under the nationalist framework. Ranajit Guha has suggested that the facile criticism of colonial historiography from the supposedly nationalist point of view lacked authenticity. It is true that the imperialistic historiography led to "an obsession with British role in India and to an underestimation of what our own institutions and our own people contributed to the dynamics of political and social change in our country.... If any false notion about Indian history originates [with imperialistic attitudes], it is still the Indians themselves, clients for PhD degrees, who feed on these without resentment, nurture the lymph carefully in their minds though years of unquestioning application, process the falsehood into dissertational form, and having pocketed the coveted degrees, come back home as carriers. It is a complicity of elites in a shared fabrication. This is a vicious circle, and if we have to break out of it at all, we must combine our criticism of British academic attitudes with a good deal of honest soul searching ourselves"[R.Guha, 1969]. Guha here anticipates a trend that emerged in the 1970s criticism of the assumptions behind the nationalist 'renaissance/national awakening ' paradigm [c. Dipesh Chakravorty, 1972, Barun de, 1973]. The substantive contribution that this critique yielded was a reassessment of the ambivalence of the dependent bourgeoisie, especially in the early years of the so-called Bengal renaissance [Sumit Sarkar and others in B.R.Nanda, 1975]. The methodological contribution was the demonstration of inadequacies of the renaissance paradigm.

In the meanwhile, from the 1950s, an alternative paradigm had emerged 'modernisation of a traditional society'. Even those innocent of any knowledge of its sociological underpinnings found it acceptable. It had the apparent merit of



being broad enough to cover the whole range of social change from the abolition of sati to the diffusion of technology. It was such a broad-spectrum concept that 'modernization' could virtually be a synonym of 'change': conversely continuities could be equally conveniently subsumed under the term 'tradition'.

The new paradigm of 'modernization/westernization', yoked with 'Sanskritisation', surfaced in historian works much later than in sociological literature. In 1956, M.N.Srinivas launched the dual concepts of westernization-Sanskritisation (in *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 1956, included in Srinivas, 1962) later elaborated into a well-developed rubric under which almost all aspects of social change in modern India could be subsumed ["Social Change in Modern India", 1966]. Some of the essential components of this approach were anticipated in a cruder form by historians and British Indian ethnographers. Thus O'Malley [1941] and many other historians employed the concept of "westernization" (and Srinivas draws much of his historical material from O'Malley) and as Rama Krishna Mukherjee [1977] has pointed out, the historian Sir Alfred Lyall [1882] and the ethnographer H.H.Risley [1891] anticipated Srinivas's concept of Sanskritisation. However, in the 1960s the general questions raised by Daniel Lerner's approach to modernization of traditional societies, and the problems specific to Indian social history raised by the retrospective application of the Sanskritisation - westernization model had some impact on historical thinking. It is this impact on historiography which concerns us here, not the development of the paradigm within the discipline of sociology. However, it may be observed that so far as 'westernization' is concerned what appeared, as a discovery to the sociologist was a commonplace to the historian. We should also note that, to the credit of M.N.Srinivas, he entered a caveat that is often ignored: "In the analysis of social and cultural change in India the British model of westernization is obviously the most important one. I have treated the British model as a static one, as complete, ready and gift-packed for delivery to India by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I am aware that such an assumption is historically untenable, but it is heuristically unavoidable [Srinivas, 1966,p53].

Let us turn to some historical applications of the westernization-Sanskritisation paradigm. Srinivas refers to the history of the Yadavas' attempt in Bihar to improve their social status through Sanskritisation and the violent resistance to that by the upper-castes [Srinivas, 1966,pp16-17]. Hetukar Jha [1977] in his detailed study of this phenomenon in the period 1921-25, found this model inadequate: "socio-economic oppression by the upper caste zamindars, led to the attempt of lower-caste peasants for Sanskritisation and this brought the two groups face to face in violent conflict. Sanskritisation implies mobility by gradual accommodation and adjustment and leaves aside conflict, which is also an ideal social process. Considering such a limitation of this concept, I have used another term- contradiction-in conjunction with the former for explaining both the phases of the situation discussed in the paper"[H Jha, 1978]. In fact Jha's historical



explication is almost entirely in terms of class contradiction and the Sanskritisation model survives only as a vestigial tail. It is not surprising that Leela Dube's criticism was that such situation as the one presented by Jha "cannot be explained by taking recourse to the concept of Sanskritisation and trying to refine it by making it multi-dimensional. At times we need to forget the concept in order to understand a situation and place it in a proper perspective" [L.Dube, 1978]. In Jha's study the Sanskritisation attempt is shown to be motivated by "economic and social oppression rather than economic prosperity"; among Hardgrave's Nadars economic prosperity leads to social status through Sanskritisation [R.L.Hardgrave Jr.1969]. Jha observes correctly that "the questions regarding why and where a caste chooses to sanskritise itself" are the crucial historical questions. 'Sanskritisation' provides merely a label for a process that may be sometimes an expression of revolt against socio-economic oppression and sometimes an expression of upward social mobility linked with betterment of economic position. The model itself yields no hypothesis, it merely helps us recognize and put a name to a phenomenon.

To take another example, the study of the so-called 'non-Brahmin movement in Kolhapur under Shahu maharaja by Chandra Y Mudaliar [1978] reveals that it was the "decline in power and economic structure" of the Marathas which led to the conflict between them and Brahmin caste groups. "The Marathas attempted to re-establish their claims to the kshatriya status and generally to sanskritise themselves. The main idea, especially on the part of Shahu was to make the Brahmins accept these claims. The Satya Shodhaks, on the other hand, charted their own course of action. They ignored the Brahmin priests altogether and adopted independent means to sanskritise themselves. This process continued till 1918 when Shahu and other moderates gave up their earlier stand and established their own competitive religious institutions such as the Marathas priesthood and the kshatria Jagadguru (Jha p.17). This is stretching the term Sanskritisation considerably: and the author seems to be aware of it when she suggests that this is one of the modernistic non-Brahmin movements". Does it then mean that here we have a social movement that is simultaneously "Sanskritising" and 'modernizing'? If so, the result is a certain fuzziness and loss of distinction between the two processes the concepts are intended to denote. The historian alone is not to be blamed for this, Srinivas himself, it has been pointed out, defines Sanskritisation in at least two different ways and the second definition diminishes the contradistinction with westernization/modernization to the vanishing point [Y singh, 1973,p.7]. The first definition is the one attempted in 1956: "The caste system is far from a rigid system... A low caste was able in a generation or two to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism, and teetotalism and by sanskritising its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins." The second attempt to define the process was in 1966:"a process by which a low Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, frequently, 'twice born' caste. Generally such changes



are followed by a claim to higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community: Yogendra Singh has correctly pointed out that "the new connotation of Sanskritisation is evidently much broader; it is neither confined to Brahmins as a reference group nor to the imitation of more rituals and religious practices: [Y.Singh, 1973, pp7-8 citations Srinivas 1962, p55, 1966, p6]. In this sense Mudaliar's use of the term 'Sanskritisation' is justified in that Srinivas authority may be cited in its defense. At the same time the concept loses historical specificity and such a loss is a predictable consequence of Srinivas later formulations, which make 'Sanskritisation' "an extremely complex and heterogeneous concept. It is even possible that it would be more profitable to treat it as a bundle of concepts than as a single concept"[M.N.Srinivas, 1962, p61]. Likewise westernization is also conceived as a cover all term for a variety of things. "In the political and cultural fields westernization has given birth not only to nationalism, but also to revivalism, communalism, 'casteism', heightened linguistic consciousness, and regionalism". [Srinivas, 1966, p55]. Each of these concepts, westernization and Sanskritisation, says Srinivas, "Subsumes mutually antagonistic values". Needless to say historians have often fumbled in applying concepts so defined.

By and large the impact of the paradigm of modernization/westernization and Sanskritisation has been marginal in historical literature. It will be presumptuous to assume this to be a measure of the value of the paradigm. The fact is that in historical contexts 'Sanskritisation' has been applied to such a variety of historical cases of mobility, set in motion by such diverse causes and ideologised in such multifarious forms, and the term westernization/modernization is used so much as a broad spectrum concept covering varieties of values, technologies, and institutions that virtually they have been debased into general notions connoting respectively endogenous and exogenous sources of social change. Looseness of the initial conceptual scheme is partly to blame for this abuse at the level of macro-level generalizations. What is more important, the task of historical explication of social change at the micro level e.g. caste mobility and caste association activities, often reveals the paradigm to be inadequate and one has to go beyond it towards explanations in terms of class contradiction. Position of caste groups in power structure transition from jati to class relations etc.

Similarly in the field of cultural change, to take another example, it has been pointed out that the modernization/westernization concept is equally open to such criticism [Panikkar, 1975]. Again modernization, in the socio economic sense, it has been forcefully argued is nothing other than Colonialisation [Bipan Chandra 1970]. Why did the modernization of colonial countries fail to provide the fruits of it, which the metropolitan advanced capitalist countries enjoyed. Was it the 'traditional' elements which blocked economic developments or was it the distorted pattern of 'modernization' under imperialist auspices [Delhi, 1978]. Does the model



of modernisation raise the relevant questions regarding economic distance between nations and internal social and economic inequalities ? These questions inevitably lead to a new organizing principle of thinking in the history of Indian society- one emphasising the economic sub structure of imperialist exploitation and the concurrent processes at the levels of culture, social institutions, politicisation processes and nation formation, etc. This would mean rethinking on older paradigms of 'progress' (evolution and incorporation into a world capitalist system, 'national renaissance/awakening' (evolution of national bourgeois hegemony) and 'modernisation/westernisation'. Colonialisation accompanied by growth of bourgeoisie class hegemony). Satish Saberwal's recent critique of sociologists lack of sensitivity as well as lack of intellectual response to structural inequalities in Indian society contains these significant comments on M.N. Srinivas, paradigm in "social change"; "It presents his most comprehensive interpretation of the wider social processes active in India. The terms 'equality' and 'inequality' are missing from the index though some related aspects are subsumed under the category 'caste' perhaps it would not be fair to judge Sriniva's understanding of colonialism in 1966 by today's standards. Unmistakable however, is the profound impression upon him by British humanitarianism, seen to subsume equalitarianism. To restate the issue more generally, the colonial regime, westernization etc, came to be mistakenly associated in the sociological mind with a tendency towards equality [whereas] inequalities common to catalyst societies which have not institutionalised strong and effective distributive mechanisms, were in colonial India further reinforced by the strategies of colonial governance"[Saberwal, 1979].

These observations of saberwal lead into the problematic from which a new paradigm may develop. The French historian, Jean Chesneaux has pointed out a quaint fact: the Confucian mandarins referred to rebels and dissidents as *fet* a negative grammatical expression denoting non-persons - a denial of their existence in the eyes of history [chesneaux, 1978p19]. Chesneaux has called this "occultation", which is "one of the most widespread practices in the state's system of control over the past, entire sections of world history have no other existence than what the oppressors permit us to know of them..." Whether it is the paradigm of pupil 'progress' or 'national awakening' or westernisation/modernisation; vast sections of the people have remained. To the extent they are present in 'imperialist' and 'nationalist' historiography, they are 'objects' in the social thought and action of the colonial bureaucracy and the nationalist leadership. In so far as 'nationalist' History was an ideological effort to define and establish national unity, which was mainly in terms of culture and tradition, it would be difficult to accommodate the question whether such continuity and unity are products of cultural domination; or let us say, the assertion of national unity in the in the freedom struggle cutting across classes and communities, would evidently involve the 'occultation' of manifestations of class struggle. These phenomena were not a part of the problematic the nationalist historian framed for himself.



It is our contention that the study of the Colonialisation process in all its dimensions, and the study of structural inequalities in colonial times and since, will yield the organising principles of new thinking of Indian social history. The necessary critique of the older conceptual frameworks has not proceeded deep enough. Nor have the historical specificities of the colonial and post-colonial society been investigated with the rigour and craftsmanship one associates with the high tradition of social science. Unless this occurs, the alternative paradigm that is beginning to take shape will be reduced to a set of catch phrases. (Already one senses the danger that an ill-defined *exmachina* called 'colonisation' may be used and debased as an all-purpose labour-saving device in the task of historical explication).

In Europe; Hobsbawm points out, the study of 'socio-economic' history, the dominant partner being the economic historian, had not "produced a specialised' academic field of social history until the 1950s, though at one time the famous *Annales* of Lucien Febvre and March Bloch dropped the economic half of its subtitle and proclaimed itself purely social. However, this was a temporary diversion of the war years and the title by which this great journal has now been known, *Annales* economics, societies, civilisations as well as the nature of its contents, reflect the original and essentially global and comprehensive aims of its founders" [Hobsbawm, 1971]. Concurrently with the increasing acceptance of social history as a field of study, there occurred in the 1950s a broadening of the conception of social history [Lewis Namier, 1952; JH Hexter, 1955, R. Williams, 1958, H.I. Erkins, 1962]. According to Hobsbawm, its best practitioners "felt uncomfortable with the term [social history] itself. They have either preferred to describe themselves simply as historians and their aim as 'total' or 'global' history as men who sought to integrate all relevant social sciences in history rather than to exemplify any one of them. One recalls Lucien Febvre's oft-quoted statement that there is no such thing as economic or social history there is just history.

Though this broader conception of social history as the history of society did not have an impact on Indian studies, there began in the 1950s a steady flow of works on some aspects of modern Indian social history. The areas of interest initially were: social policies of the government, education and cultural history, ideas and movements in 'social reform' growth of; the so-called middle class local rural history, social origins of entrepreneurship, etc. Admittedly in the post Independence year's national intellectual energies were concentrated in the areas of technology, science and economics. At the root of it was the; concern with techno-economic development but this itself raised certain questions regarding economic development and modernization the social and institutional framework, the value system, the origins of entrepreneurship, continuities and changes in village India etc. Often, despite their conceptual anchorage in a contrary tradition (eg neo-classical economics on structural functionalism), social scientists were compelled to turn to certain historical dimensions. The detailed village studies for example, compelled researchers to go



into the past, perhaps, as E LeRoy Ladurie has put it, the compelling reason may be the "stratigraphic character" of rural society: "the specific contribution it receives from every century, or group of centuries, is not wiped out but merely overlaid, " one has therefore, even before it becomes possible to understand their structural arrangements, to read the; sum of these contributions as if they were laid bare by a geological section. "[Ladurie, 1979.p80]. The historical perspective could not be ignored even by those working as field anthropologists [Srinivas, 1962 p136-47; Cohn, 1960 and 1961; and Srinivas and Shah, 1960]. Similarly, in all social sciences some historical questions regarding the long-term dynamics of economic and social change were bound to be raised. It is true that, the social historians were not fully equipped to respond to the challenge the new problems posed. It is also possible to argue that the entire problematic of modernization was misconceived and, as Gunder Frank has put it, the new sociology of underdevelopment exposed the 'under-development of sociology' [Frank, 1969,p21]. Nevertheless, the 1960's and the 1970's saw the opening up of new research. Areas, problematic, and methods as a result of the re thinking process forced upon all social scientists. Social history could no longer be contained in the older definition, it could not be trivialized into a study of 'manners' and; 'customs', its concerns could no longer be divorced from the larger problematic of history.

The task of; redefining social history is not for us to take up here. It is being defined continually by its practitioners. The agenda for the student of society in history has been boldly outlined by Lucien Goldman: "Every social act is a historical fact and vice versa. It follows that history and sociology study the same phenomena and that each of them grasps some real aspect of thee phenomena: but the image which each discipline gives of them will necessarily be partial and abstract in so far as it is not completed and qualified by the findings of the other sociology cannot be concrete unless it is; historical, just as history, if it wishes to go beyond the more recording of facts must necessarily become explicative, that is to say, more or less sociological"[Goldman,1969p23]. If social history must live up to such claims it becomes not a specialization but an approach to the socialization but an approach to the totality of history. It may study the system of relationship between the parts and the whole of society in all human activities including economic, cultural and political of Jacques Le coff, 1971. However, in practice the study of such relationship in their social aspects usually takes a datum what is explicandum for the political or economic historians. It is only by the definition of what is given and what is to be explained that the social historian may continue to demarcate his concern from that of neighboring disciplines

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## SUB-SUBALTERN HISTORIES AND MISSIONARY SOURCES

Y. Chinna Rao

It has become one of the truisms of the historical profession that the peasants of traditional societies are the silent actors of history. This aphorism is pertinently applicable to the Dalit context in Indian history. Attempt at historically locating Dalits is impeded by an acute shortage of direct evidence about the realities of Dalit social life even for the most of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately neither the official nor the non-official sources are detailed and sophisticated enough to be put together a comprehensive picture of Dalits. Till recently, their origins were obscure and presence was neglected. In the standard Indian history works, Dalits are treated either as marginal people without a history of their own or as objects rather than as subjects. Often these works show reluctance to mention Dalits, as if mere mention would tantamount to pollution. Even if a sentence or a paragraph about them figured it certainly would be of rules which dwelt on how to avoid them or the type of punishment to be meted out to Dalits. Fortunately, recent decades have shown that in addition to socially concerned scholars (including Dalit scholars of course), an effort is growing among Dalits to seek directions for the future through a better understanding of the Dalit past.

Dalits have not yet become a part of Indian historiography, though the study is of immense relevance and significance with regard to the inherent radical democratic identity of their movement and their role being that of productive communities. Available scholarship on Dalits' history suffers from lack of historical and written documentation. Yet, once again, this is not to rule out the immense significance of a few analytical and comprehensive studies on Dalit history.<sup>1</sup>

It is in this context that, in this paper an attempt is made to look at the missionary sources of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by missionaries, who worked in and around Andhra Pradesh. The correspondence between the missionaries within the colony and home to headquarters by missionaries in the field and with government officials, along with rare missionary tracts, provides immense scope for the retrieval of the historical experience of Dalits of Andhra, or for those matter pan Indian 'untouchable' communities. In this paper we shall try to discern the earlier imperial policies or attitudes towards missionaries and to gauge the response of the natives? Secondly, we aim to identify the nature of encounter between missionaries and various communities in the regions with special emphasis on the communities at the periphery. And finally a note on the missionary sources and their crucial use in constructing Dalit history, simultaneously reflecting on the problem in utilizing sources which are looked upon with great suspicion within the discipline.



History writing in India was consciously served to a nationalist recovery of India's self, as in postcolonial societies. In the south Indian context, history in the pre-colonial period was codified and conserved by the strategic alliance between the powerful kings and the influential priests. The scepter and pen conjointly functioned as fundamental instruments in the production, preservation and circulation of south Indian tradition.<sup>2</sup> This is evident in the two principal sources utilized in the reconstruction of south Indian society. On the one hand, inscriptional sources, most of which are recorded in temples, is a vital source of Indian historiographers.<sup>3</sup> Often, most of these inscriptions are documents recording gifts to Brahmins or temples from wealthy and powerful persons or groups. These inscriptions also provide information about 'the reigning King, his genealogy, conquests and dharmic life', because it is in the Kings' honour that these gifts are bestowed.<sup>4</sup> The alliance between dominant caste groups upholding conventional norms in production of such documents largely resulted in the exclusion of Dalits. On the other, literary sources in south India are abundant and similarly rich. The relationship between the patron and the court poets and literary figures is a well-recognized fact. They depended reciprocally; the King endowed and honoured the poets with gifts, the latter produced literature reinforcing notions of the kings as embodiments of wisdom, compassion, righteousness and generosity.<sup>5</sup>

Even a cursory glance at the history of Telugu literature, particularly the medieval texts, would reveal how literature was mainly confined to zamindar darbars and scholarly gatherings. Until the mid-seventeenth century, writers, predominantly Brahmins, tried to display their command over language (Sanskrit or sanskritised Telugu), and to score over their rivals.

Available literary sources are often the translations of Hindu epics till fourteenth century A.D. Starting from Rajaraja Narendra (eleventh century) all the then rulers, 'generously' donated Agraharas to the poets, who in turn devoted all their 'intellect' to praise their patron and depict some of their affairs with women and also to preserve the Vedic ritual and consolidated the Varnasrama Dharma. Some literary sources make scattered references of the Chandalas being employed as Talayaries or watchmen of the villages.<sup>6</sup> Edarupalli record mentions them as Charmakaras.<sup>7</sup> Fourteenth and Fifteenth century literature like Kridabhiramam of Vallabhacharya makes mention of this Chandala caste but does not categorize it as separate, outside the pale of Hinduism.<sup>8</sup> Proudhakavi Mallana in his Rukmangada Charitra mentions that Chandalas were prohibited from witnessing religious ceremonies performed by the "high caste". These sources evidently show that Chandalas were appendage to the Chaturvarna of Hindu society, but their main occupation was agrarian labour. Being the productive communities they played a major role in society,<sup>9</sup> and worshipped deities such as Ekavira and Mahuramma.<sup>10</sup>



The later medieval period is better known as Rayalu-yugam in Telugu literature.<sup>11</sup> Poets of Prabhandas style, included Allasani Peddana (Manucharistramu), Nandi Timmana (Parijatapaharanam), Ramabhadrakavi, (Ramabhyudayamu), Dhurjati (Kalahasti Mahastyam or Kalashastisva Satakam) and Pingali Surana (Kalapoomnodayam). But none of them took to reflecting 'society' as a subject. While analyzing the local administration systems under Vijayanagara, T.V. Mahalingam mentions that a seventeenth century inscription refers to eighteen professional association bodies. Kurantakas (shoe maker), one of them seemed to have formed a part of local assemblies.<sup>12</sup> The references to "untouchables" do not go beyond this.

In the seventeenth century Vijayanagar lost its importance and witnessed the political influence of feudatory courts such as Gandikota, Siddhavatam, Nellore, Gingee, Tanjore and Mathura. Literature flourished and some of the popular literary figures were Matli Ananta (1590-1210) of Siddnavatam (Cuddapah district), Pushpagiri Timmana at Nellore, Raghunadha Nayaka at Tanjore.<sup>13</sup> In northern Andhra literature enjoyed patronage at feudatory courts like Pithapuram and Paddapuram.<sup>14</sup> Surprisingly works do not deal with social themes. References about "untouchables" occur in the context of taboos, punishment and perpetuation of their servile status. These Prabhandas texts departed from the epic and puranic texts in several respects, a theme might have taken from the puranas, but restricted to one or two episodes. Sringararasa (the erotic sentiment) is the predominant element in literature and confined to the classical standard in usage with the narration subordinate to the description and the two are not integrated.<sup>15</sup> The only qualitative shift is that the target of audience for the Puranas was the "common people", but the Prabhandas only seemed the artistic demands of the pleasure-seeking upper class, i.e. the kings and his nobility. The prime aim of these texts was to appease the patrons with non relevance for society at large.<sup>16</sup> However, there was a set of poets outside this circle of literary client-patron relation, who, a considerably contributed to Telugu literature in this period. Worth mentioning among them are Tyagayya, Potuluri Vira Brahmam, Paparaju and Vemana.

One of the most fascinating aspects with regard to invisibility of such writers is evident in the rediscovery of a subaltern ascetic, Vemana until first quarter of the twentieth century. No Telugu poet, scholar, critic or even the intellectuals make any reference to Vemana either in their works or in the debate on reform. It is speculative as to what were the reasons for the conscious reluctance to accord due recognition to Vemana and his philosophy. Was it his non-Brahmin status or his rational philosophy which directed ridicule at the caste system or superstitious religious practices? Probably the first available source of information about Telugu poets and writers in print is the Biographical Sketches of the Deccan Poets (1829) by Cavally Venkata Rama Swami. It consists of memories of the lives of several eminent bards, both ancient and contemporary, which flourished in different provinces of the Indian peninsula, compiled from 'authentic' documents. It deals, in all with 108 poets, of whom 47 are Telugu poets, but Vemana does not figure in it. Later on



Kandukuri Viresalingam's *Andhra Kavula Charitramu* (1899), which includes many minor poets, even obscure ones, surprisingly, omits Vemana. With some more additions in his revised edition (1917) the total number of poets swells to 220 but still Vemana remained excluded.<sup>17</sup> But this 'scholastic' Brahmin negligence in including Vemana was compensated for by western scholars, who recognized his enormous popularity among the masses. A French Jesuit Father, Le Gac, who in 1730 sent Louis XV, King of France, a manuscript of 368 of Vemana's poems, made the first recorded contact of the west with Vemana's literature. This manuscript is preserved in *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris.<sup>18</sup> In 1806, a French missionary, Abbe J.A. Dubois, writing about Hindu society and culture characterized Vemana as one of the Indian poets who wrote in a "philosophic vein".<sup>19</sup> This description caught the attention of Charles Phillip Brown, a British Civil Servant in Madras, who was interested in preparing a Telugu text, a possible aid to Englishmen in learning Telugu. In 1824, with the assistance of Telugu scholars, Brown started reading Vemana in the vernacular and began collecting from different parts of Andhra, palm leaf and paper manuscripts of Vemana's poems.

As a result, in 1829, the first edition of this collection was published by Brown, entitled *The Versus of Vemana: Moral, Religious and Satirical*. Here is an important point that needs to be mentioned. Out of 500 copies of this edition, fifty copies were presented to him as editor's copies and the remaining 450 copies disappeared mysteriously. It took Brown ten years to discover, that perhaps to his shock, with the active connivance of the 'high' caste-Hindu pundits of the College Board, the missing copies were rolled up as waste paper and tucked away in the lumber room of the college library.<sup>20</sup> A host of western rendering of Vemana's work poured in the following the translation by Brown.

Nineteenth century imperialist history had shrouded India's past in darkness, denuded its history of any evidence of change and achievement with permanent marks of inferiority. If the nationalist historians maintained silent on the non-elite and non-Brahmin contribution towards national movement, the Cambridge historians projected 'lower' castes as mere passive followers of elite leaders.<sup>21</sup> Marxist historians remained within the classical class perspectives and showed reluctance to address issues related to caste. In Andhra, disillusionment of a Dalit activist with the communist movement led to reassertion of caste centered issues. For instance, Konada Surya Prakasa Rao,<sup>22</sup> while President of Krishna District Agricultural Labour Association, Communist Party took a resolution declaring that 'the Muslim League as political party and the Scheduled Caste Federation of Ambedkar as communal'.<sup>23</sup> Innumerable such instances can be located within the political developments in the region.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Subaltern school of thought that emerged in 1980s, successfully postulated an alternative framework but hardly have raised fundamental issues related to outcaste historical experience.<sup>25</sup>



## II

In attempt to construct Dalit history, particularly Telugu speaking regions, one generally draws from archival sources like reports of census, commissions and committees and gazetteers. Other sources like in the form of biographical and autobiographical,<sup>26</sup> writings of Dalit organic intellectuals do exist.<sup>27</sup> Of course, such alternative sources are available in plenty such as the literature in the form of poems, novels, dramas, contemporary press reports and caste-association activities, though in the vernacular. Another vital source consists of Christian missionary tracts and archival depositories, awaiting historical recognition in reconstructing the historical experience of the cultures at the periphery. Christian missionary sources are vast though scattered throughout. These sources exist as travelogues<sup>28</sup> histories of evangelical groups,<sup>29</sup> accounts of caste and Christianity,<sup>30</sup> conversion movements,<sup>31</sup> memoirs of various missionaries<sup>32</sup> in addition to missionary journals, newsletters and pamphlets.

A brief note on the colonial government within which the missionaries emerged and functioned, would help to locate the developments within a specific local context. It needs to be noted that the East India Company never had an 'official policy' on missionaries. The evangelical and colonial maxim that emerged evolved as pragmatic responses to circumstances. Initially, the Company had to come to terms with the large number of Roman Catholics resident with in its territories. In their attempt to foster the loyalty of its Roman Catholic 'subjects', the Company adopted a policy of toleration and to a certain extent, supports Catholicism. But their activities were restricted and any work in British territory regained the permission of the Company.<sup>33</sup>

Political rather than religious considerations were paramount as far as the Company was concerned. Their struggle for supremacy in trade and political arena was also extended to other areas like evangelism. In 1715 the Company suspicious of the priests subject to the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa as politically suspect expelled them from Surat and Madras.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, French and Italian priests were suspected for political motives were expelled. The Company's position on religious matters in the early days was clearly stated in a 1744 dispatch of the Court of Directors of Madras which maintained that the Church must never be independent of the state.<sup>35</sup> The Company's aim was to limit commercial competition and to keep out 'undesirable' Europeans who could disturb the status quo in its rapidly expanding territory. The Company also was concerned that the disreputable character of many of the interlopers who managed to find their way to India would lower Europeans in the eyes of the people and cause problems for internal security.<sup>36</sup>

It was within this background that in India, the Protestant missionary activity began in India in 1706 when a mission established in Tranquebar under the patronage of the Danish King Frederick IV. The missionaries soon began to work in British territory, largely because of difficulties they faced in Tranquebar where the Danish



authorities were far from sympathetic to them.<sup>37</sup> By 1740 Protestant missionary work in the territory was well established and in 1752 the Court of Directors empowered the Governor of Madras to provide financial assistance where it deemed fit.<sup>38</sup> In 1813, at the periodic renewal of the East India Company's charter, heated discussion occurred over the question of the propagation of Christianity in India. Lord Wellesley's observed that 'a Christian governor could not have done less and a British governor ought not do more' found approval on both sides of the debate in 1813.<sup>39</sup>

### III

The association of Christian missionaries with Telugu speaking people dates back to the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, when two Jesuit fathers and a Brother worked their way to Chandragiri in Chittoor district.<sup>40</sup> A Roman Catholic Mission in 1735 at Cuddapah and London Missionary Society in 1805 at Vishakhapatnam, their activities were extended to Ballary, Cuddapah, Anantpur and Vizianagaram areas. The Vicar of Apostolic Mission in 1832 expanded to Nellore, Cuddapah and Anantapur. American Baptist Mission was established in 1840 and extended to Nellore, Udayagiri, Ongole, Bapatla, Cumbhum and Kurnool.<sup>41</sup> The American Lutheran Mission came in 1842 and extended its work to Guntur, Repalle, Bapatla, Palnadu, Vinukonda, Bandaru and Rajahmundry.

The Church Missionary Society commenced its operation in and around Musalipatnam in 1842.<sup>42</sup> The Free Church of Scotland at Nellore in 1848, and the Canadian Baptist Mission came in 1890 and spread over to Kakinada, Bheemunipatnam, Srikakulam, Bobbili and Tuni. By the end of nineteenth century there were more than twenty missionary societies were emerged in similar pursuits directed to philanthropic work, especially in the fields of education and health. Consequently, problem of boundaries of each missionary society was resolved through a gentleman's agreement. For instance, the Lutheran, Baptist and Church Missionary Society missionaries agreed not to work in each others' field, though the converts, not infrequently crossed and recrossed mission boundaries.

Initially, one of the objectives of the missionaries was to woo caste-Hindu converts by setting up Anglo-Vernacular high Schools, which were established at Masulipatnam (1843),<sup>43</sup> Ellore (1855) and Bezawada (1857). These missionary societies, more particularly the Anglicans, proved as unsuccessful in Andhra, as they had been in Bengal and other areas,<sup>44</sup> in converting the high caste-Hindus through educational institutions.<sup>45</sup> Until 1880 there had been only 23 caste-Hindu converts: 16 Brahmins, 6 non-Brahmins and one Muslim.<sup>46</sup> On the contrary they received overwhelming and enthusiastic response from 'untouchable' communities that eventually led to a dramatic en mass conversions, a dominant feature in the evangelical history of southern India. The mass movement among 'untouchables' in the CMS territory began with the conversion of a Mala headman named Pogulu Venkayya, notorious for daring exploits of highway robbery before his baptism in



1859. His testimony regarding the claims of Christianity set into motion the conversion movements that eventually brought thousands of Malas and, later Madigas into the church.<sup>47</sup> Venkayya himself was said to have persuaded over seven hundred people from his community to be baptized. Similarly, the American Baptist Telugu Mission reported that by 1912 there were 61,687 church members on its rolls, almost all of them former Madigas brought into the Christian fold through the initial leadership of Yerraguntla Periah of Ongole. This mission alone baptized between 1,500 and 3,500 Madigas annually.<sup>48</sup>

The missionaries interceded and protected these converts against money-lenders and the lower echelons of government, from the exploitation of higher castes, provided legal assistance and defended them against persecutors.<sup>49</sup> These 'untouchables' were also frequently accused of crimes, whether they were guilty or not, the fact remains that missionaries offered them support.<sup>50</sup> The missionaries greeted the mass conversions with mixed reactions. Although aiding the church quantitatively, the movement brought in hordes of uneducated and poor converts whom many missionaries felt were ill equipped to serve. By 1933, roughly 80 percent of India's protestant Christians were mass movement converts from depressed class backgrounds.<sup>51</sup>

Conversions to Christianity occurred in Andhra at a faster rate than in almost any other part of the south Asian region. During the first four decades of the twentieth century, the Indian Christian population grew at a faster rate than other major communal groups. Between 1921 and 1931, an average of 12,855 converts joined the church each month. The Indian Christian population of India increased at a rate of 32.5 percent during this decade, with Protestant Christians increasing at a rate of 41 percent.<sup>52</sup> In 1931, it was estimated that nearly 20 per cent of the depressed classes in West Godavari, 32 per cent in Krishna, and 57 per cent in Guntur districts had been converted to Christianity.<sup>53</sup> In some areas there were converts in almost every 'untouchable' hamlet.<sup>54</sup> Malas and Madigas had been ordained in increasing numbers and by early twentieth century, a casual observer might well have been excused for thinking that churches existed solely to serve the needs of the depressed, the deprived, and the outcastes.

The work of Christian missionaries brought about the amelioration of Dalits in three significant ways. Firstly, those who become converts to Christianity gained a new social consciousness as Christians. Secondly, those who still remained within the fold of Hinduism began to realize that the dogma of 'untouchability' which for so long had justified their miserable condition was false, and that it was not upheld by the missionaries.<sup>55</sup> Thirdly, the work of the Missionaries stimulated the Hindu socio-religious reformers to reform Hinduism to counter this unprecedented development and increasing influence of religions like Christianity and Islam. The missionary activities stirred the consciousness of Dalits of Andhra, who became aware of their rights,<sup>56</sup> and realized the inequality of their economic as well as ritual status.<sup>57</sup>



## IV

In the light of these developments, let us look at how far missionary sources could be utilized in constructing Dalit past. Here I would like to focus on four aspects: Dalit religion and culture; education and health; famine or ecological history and perhaps more importantly issues of identity.

Dalits have always been regarded as part of Hindu society, accommodated in the chaturvarna scheme of social stratification, as an adjacent or appendage to Shudras, as *ati-shudras*. Despite the fact that Dalits countered these patronizing ideals through their self-assertive identity struggles. Take example of the institution of Matangi. Emma Rauschenbusch-Clough has made the first recorded information about the 'Matangi'.<sup>58</sup> The custom of 'Matangi' among the cultures could have been lost in historical wilderness had it not been recorded in missionary tracts and those associated with evangelical activities. The next mention of this system was by A. Madhaviah,<sup>59</sup> who narrates local myths providing the linkage between the religious identity of the Matangi and the Jogini/Basivi system.<sup>60</sup> In fact Edgar Thurston's description of 'Matangi' system drew extensively from these two sources.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Rev. Henry Whitehead, Bishop of Madras, long association with the outcastes of the Telugu speaking regions resulted in a valuable account of religious practices and beliefs of these communities.<sup>62</sup> Works of this genre emerge as a the only sources to construct the historical experience and cultural identity of these cultures invoking crucial issues that have been neglected and unrecognized within the mainstream historiographical traditions.

During the first half of the nineteenth century some new developments had taken place in the educational history of Madras Presidency. Sir Thomas Munro,<sup>63</sup> Governor of Madras (1920-27), introduced a comprehensive and farsighted scheme after realizing the fact that literacy was confined to Brahmins, merchants, village lords and "principal ryots". Although Munro had no wish to interfere with the existing indigenous educational pattern and held the view that the people should be left to manage their schools in their own way, he ordered a general survey of "complete list of schools in each district showing the number of scholars and teachers, castes to which they belonged, books and the materials they use and the sources of funding for these institutions",<sup>64</sup> along with an estimation of total populace of the region. The results of this survey-along with an estimation of census data provides a fascinating view on education in the 1820s, more precisely in the years 1823-25. In Madras Presidency as a whole there were 120,498 schools and 188,000 students in a population of 12,850,941, roughly one school per thousand persons and 1 student per 67 persons.<sup>65</sup> Education was under the control of Brahmins and religious in content, the medium being Sanskrit and Telugu. Brahmins comprised 60 to 75 per cent of all pupils, far outnumbering "clean" non-Brahmin mercantile communities such as Chettis and Komatis and former-warrior lords of villages<sup>66</sup> such as Reddis, Kammas, and Rajus. The books used in these institutions were either directly derived



from the Vedas and various Shastras and Puranas or from the epic literature<sup>67</sup> and the teacher was almost always a Brahmin.<sup>68</sup>

One striking aspect of the report of the survey was the exclusion of "untouchable" communities from the survey. The category "Pariah" or "unclean" Shudra is conspicuously absent here. The "untouchable" communities, whether the pariahs and the Pallars (of Tamil speaking areas) or the Malas and Madigas (of Telugu speaking areas), the "servile" communities, "who made up half of the population, were not counted".<sup>69</sup> One of the reasons being that the Brahmins made up the forms and undertook much of the actual work,<sup>70</sup> so it is very unlikely that they entered Dalitwadās (Dalit hamlets) to get an actual report or state of their affairs. Munro's inquiries showed that there were a few Shudra class pupils but none from the 'untouchable' castes.<sup>71</sup> Influenced by filtration theory, and the fear of offending the caste-Hindus, the British Government in India made no attempt till mid-nineteenth century to make provision for the untouchables' education. But pioneering efforts of the missionaries to educate 'untouchable' communities along with backward classes compensated the official neglect.<sup>72</sup> An awareness gradually started developing among them during the nineteenth century mainly due to the efforts of the missionaries.<sup>73</sup>

The famous Wood's Dispatch of 1854 realized the need of educating the masses not only through English but also through the vernaculars as well. After the dispatch of 1854, the Director of Public Instruction took charge of the Department of Education. The "Rate Schools", which were novel in the Presidency and unique to Andhra,<sup>74</sup> were started in the Godavari districts. Under the scheme, the villagers were to contribute for the education of their children. The ryots voluntarily agreed to a rate or subscription to maintain schools in their villages. The system of rate schools was directly connected only with the land holding classes who could contribute to their maintenance along with their regular revenue payments. Since the "untouchable" communities formed the bulk of landless agricultural labourers, without any landholdings, they could not benefit from this rate school system. This scheme of voluntary rate lost its voluntary aspect and was regularized with the Madras Education Act of 1863.

While the spread of missionaries and their penetration in rural areas, more particularly in 'untouchable' hamlets, they established churches which worked as school during the day, and as a church during the night. The typical Telugu village chapel-cum-school was usually without wall, or sometimes walls of Palmyra leaves or mud or stone, with thatched roofs.<sup>75</sup> As a part of their philanthropic work, all these missions added schools and colleges to their churches and worked for the upliftment of the oppressed sections.<sup>76</sup> A cursory look at the state of Dalit educational history of Andhra would reveal the painstaking efforts the missionaries undertook to sowing seeds of education among Dalits of Andhra. Often, it is realized that the first generation of Dalit education later either became activists of future Dalit



struggles or worked for the education of their brethren. So a failure to utilize missionary sources, especially in exploring issues related to Dalit education, the picture would remain incomplete and fragmented. Evangelical educational work would critically reflect on colonial policies, intra-caste and inter-caste experiences and the unique model of educational growth in the region. As the missionaries touched the souls of the outcastes and their educational activities are inextricably linked with poignant emotions and issues that are yet to gain respectability in mainstream discourses.

Similarly, when one looks at the identity process of Dalits these missionary sources reveal many interesting and significant facts. What needs to be noted is that a conversion movement is like a kind of group identity, in which the group passes through a negative rejection of its lowly place in Hindu society to a positive affirmation of a new social and religious identity.<sup>77</sup> This new identity does not depend on its acceptance and recognition by the higher castes; indeed, it has been chosen and is sustained despite their refusal to accept it. Gradually this process of identity led to significant changes in occupation and recognized enhancement of status.<sup>78</sup> Emergence of new consciousness entails conflict at various levels, the ideological and structural. The missionary's role in the emergence of a new outcaste personality is interwoven with various shifts during the intense evangelical activity.

Finally, a note on the utility of such sources in ecological or environmental history in relation to Dalits. What we find often in government records/government managed archival records has, always been about policy matters, on how to avoid, what would be future consequences and so on. But my limited reading reveals that there is no reference of the intensity of the disaster or calamities, especially the manner in which it galvanized the precarious conditions in which the outcastes lived. One outstanding example is of Gladstone's *The Story of the Masulipatam Cyclone of 1864*.<sup>79</sup> The event was narrated in the following poignant lines "...It was the morning of All Saints Day, 1864, ... Mr. Maiden, the Port Attendant, noticed as early eight o' clock that the barometer was steadily falling...the rain poured through the roofs... about 30,000 were drowned that night had a decent burial; and the hospital was drowned with strange sights of dead and dying.... Next to the Noble bungalow was the Sharkey Girls School. There were sixty-six pupils on the rolls on November first, and of them only thirty-three lived see the morning." These narratives of suffering could only find due record in tracts that were involved at a intimate and humanitarian level than in government controlled documents who could dismiss such details as 'unworthy' or 'irrelevant'.

## V

What strikes the researcher familiar with missionary literature and archival materials is the wide range and variety of missionary command of knowledge on Indian society throughout the nineteenth century. Almost everywhere they went, the missionaries observed, took notes and commented on the nature of social life and



conditions. The missionaries were especially interested in the ideological issues of the relationship between Hinduism and the social system. Apart from such theoretical consideration, their comments have related to issues of material and cultural reality and issues which arouse out of their encounter within a specific context. One of the central issues in the missionary literature was the life and condition of the depressed classes in the rural areas, particularly the marginalized and oppressed 'untouchables'. The missionaries became better acquainted with problems of the cultures at the periphery than most other Europeans.<sup>80</sup>

This raises fundamental issues; what are the problems associated with the unique nature of missionary sources? This in relation to central concern of this paper: the reconstruction of the Dalit history in a specific local context.

One clear advantage in using them is that not always present in other records, specifically, in the case of missionaries we already have certain presumptions about their ultimate aims and that biases are likely to be encoded in their critique of 'native' culture. Whereas in other sources the writers' motives cannot be so clearly apparent, as in the case of the missionary material. The missionaries were under considerable pressure to 'produce' the 'evidence' and verify everything they claimed. The very success of their reform crusades depended greatly on their collection of reliable information and on convincing the skeptics and unbelievers. Moreover, in their endeavour if they were to enlist the support of others they had to do their research and be prepared to defend the findings. For instance, one of the earliest specimen of evangelical 'social research', vital if they were to sway public opinion, were the surveys they undertook in connection with the Sati custom.<sup>81</sup>

Missionary papers, are scattered across libraries and record offices.<sup>82</sup> In most cases the missionary archives that survive are the accumulated records of the sending organizations. These are, of course, most valuable source, containing as they do letters and reports written home to headquarters by missionaries in the field, as well as documents recording the formulation and development of mission policy. There are detailed records created in the field: lists of converts and church members, the records of missionary institutions, the minutes of papers of local mission council, particulars of itineration work and so on, were mostly kept in the missionary headquarters. Such records, at least some of them still exist in the missionary field, scattered in various locations.<sup>83</sup> Information gleaned from these tracts, documents and accounts could be of immense value to retrieve the outcaste personality from historical wilderness and complicate the historical space by raising critical issues that have so far been endowed a marginal space in mainstream historical discourses. So also any just suspicious on the nature of source could as in many cases be overcome by cross checking with alternative sources. As it needs to be recognized that the historical experience of Dalits with missions is interwoven and to dismiss it on grounds of mere 'suspicious' would be a great loss to the discipline.



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*Vemana's poetry is immortal                      Viresalingam has surely erred*  
*By ignoring this great poet,                      In his treatise on Andhra poets.*  
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- 28 Perhaps first in its kind was of Abbe Jeane Antoine Dubois, a French missionary's experiences of early decade of 19th century of Indian people, society and culture. Chapter five of his work contains one of the earliest documented description of Indian 'untouchables'. This was originally written in 1815, translated by Henry K. Beauchamps. See *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, op. cit.

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# ARTICULATION OF SELF AND THE OTHER: EMERGENCE OF THE DALIT MOVEMENT IN ANDHRA PRADESH

A. Satyanarayana

In this essay I will focus on the historical context and the nature of dalit assertion, identity and consciousness in modern Andhra during the pre and post-independence period.<sup>1</sup> It examines the growth of dalit consciousness and literary works of some dalit intellectuals which reflected the agony and anger of dalit masses. An attempt is also made to analyse the nature of dalit mobilization and of literary representation of dalit sensibilities and the emergence of dalit awareness in the writings of selected dalit writers. In need, the emergence of dalit autonomous movement and dalit literary texts/viz poems, drama, novel, short-stories, essays etc. was related to the specific socio-political upheaval in colonial Andhra which was characterized by the growing social reform and non-brahmin movements as well as constitutional reforms and dalits' urge for representation in political/administrative institutions.

## Dalit Assertion in Colonial Andhra

The formation of Adi-Andhra Mahasabha in 1917 signified the collective self-mobilization of dalits for self-respect, dignity, equality and social justice. This movement also heralded the new found identity, unity and solidarity among the dalit communities, for it articulated their resolve to escape the ascriptive and hereditary fixation of occupation and formalized their struggle to democratize the civil society and appropriate emerging new forms of power structures. Three factors contributed for the development of social radicalism among dalits in colonial Andhra (a) influence of pre-colonial anti-brahmanical heterodox sects (vaisnavism, saivism, nasraiah etc.) and spread of Christianity (b) upper caste-led social reforms movements like Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj (c) growth of Western education.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, a host of dalit organic intellectuals through their writings launched an attack on the Brahmanical ideology and thus became the facilitators in critiquing and undermining the unequal social order and social inequality based on caste and birth. In particular, I propose to focus on the following dalit intellectuals and activists:

1. Bhagya Reddi Varma (alias Madari Bhagaiah) (1888-1939) (Redu=Reddi; Varma=title) founder of Dalit Movement in Modern Andhra in the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> First President of Adi-Andhra Mahasabha in 1917. He was also the founder of Adi-Hindu Social Service League and Adi-Hindu Bhavan in Hyderabad for "removing ignoble appellations" and spreading the Adi-Hindu identity and education among lower castes. He rejected the Panchama identity and organized many Adi-Hindu conferences to spread awareness among the dalit communities. He asserted that the so-called untouchables were never a part of caste-Hindu (Aryan) society. He



suggested a break from orthodox Hindu tradition and religion as the primary necessity for ending the plight of dalits as well as to maintain their separate identity. As the foremost champion of dalit cause he started a paper called *Bhagya Nagar Patrika*, a Telugu fortnightly devoted for dalit upliftment in the Nizam's state. Later in 1937 the same was brought out under the title *Adi-Hindu*, edited and published by him. He described *Adi-Hindus* as descendants of the original inhabitants of this country who were rulers and owners of this land of their birth before the advent of the Aryans to the country. About the anti-caste radicalism of Bhagyareddi Varma and his negation of brahmanical tradition Gail Omvedt remarked: "In treating untouchables as the original 'sons of the soil', inseeing Brahamans as outsiders pushing all the original Indians down to south India, he was said to have used the term 'Adi-Hindu' in a way in which 'Hindu' did not refer to religion but was by foreigners to those living in India."<sup>4</sup>

2. Gurram Jashuva, (1895-1971) – Titles Mahakavi, Kavichakravarti. Author of *Gabbilam* (the Bat) Long poem, 1941, *Anadha* (1940) The Orphan. He questioned the very creation of the fifth order, the *Panchama Varna*; he also questioned the wisdom of the caste-Hindus in treating the Dalit masses as *panchamas*. He wrote<sup>5</sup>

We heard that for the old Brahma  
Born four sons  
The wretched lower than the animal that is this  
Fifth Caste Person:  
Savitri: (O'Mother).  
In Bat Jashuva portrays the miserable conditions of the dalit masses  
When his (dalit's) hands do not work  
The green fields hesitate to yield crops  
His sweat, provides food for the world  
But he himself has no food.  
It also reflects how the poisonous snake called Hinduism perpetrates  
oppression on dalits  
By swallowing the blood of the wretched (dalit)  
Lives the iron ankleted Mother  
Upon smelling his air hisses with vengeance  
The four-hood Hindu cobra

Gurram Jashuva is remembered as a forceful poet who raised his strong voice of protest in verse against the caste system, untouchability and socio-economic inequalities. He inaugurated a new era in modern poetry by take up the problems of dalits as subject matter of poetry. He was also a pioneer who inaugurated a new trend in dalit literature. He was a source of inspiration for many young dalit youth and writers.

3. Kusuma Dharmanna (1896-1948) was one of the prominent Dalit organic intellectual leaders of the *Adi-Andhra Movement*, a famous poet, Kavi



Veera and a prolific writer. His famous writings are: Nalla Dora Thanam (1933) Harijan Satakamu, (1933), Madya Paana Nishedamu (1930).<sup>6</sup> He is called as The Forerunner of Dalit Movements in Andhra. He was considered a basic poet, a gifted speaker and an able leader. To awaken the dalit masses to fight for their civil and democratic rights he funded a weekly called Jayabheri. He was very critical of Brahmanical ideology and critiqued the Varna system in his various writings. His poetry depicts the multiple dimensions of exploitation of dalit masses by the rich peasantry and also the sorrow and anger of dalit labourers. Kusuma Dharmanna denounced caste Hindus for the inhuman practice of untouchability.<sup>7</sup>

They consider us inferior to Dogs and Foxes  
Sit beside a Leprosy patient  
Domesticate Dogs and Monkeys with affection  
Love Cats and Birds  
Don't trouble Pigs  
Allow Crows to touch water  
But abuse us and don't allow us to approach them

His poetry was indeed "the true representation of unfolding contemporary social reality."

4. Jala Rangaswamy (1904) born at Kambalapeta in Rajahmundry. He was a teacher by profession and worked for Dalit education; he established many educational institutions along with his wife Jala Mangamma. His writings include Antarani Vaarevaru? (1930); (who are the untouchables) Malasuddhi (cleanliness of Malas) (1930). In his long poem Antaranivarevaru he claimed social equality by claiming glorious ancestry. He wrote<sup>8</sup>

The great warriors of Puranas were our people  
Vashista, Valmiki belonged to our dynasty  
Vedavyasa, Parasara were our people  
Hanuman, Sugreeva were our brothers  
Did not great mothers of Heros born amongst us  
Did not they observe chastity  
Is not Arundhati, the daughter of our caste  
Sabari, Matangi were women  
A caste in which such great people were born being alienated  
We were made lowly people, excommunicated

Rangaswamy along with his wife also established Adi-Jana Grandha Mandali and published about 12 works. Important among them are Dunnevaride Bhumi (land to the tiller) The First Telugu Dalit novel Ryotu Pilla (Peasant Girl) was written by his wife Jala Mangamma (1909-1074). She also started a paper Veerabharati in 1935.<sup>9</sup>

5. Nakka China Venkaiah, (1892-1970) – The most famous among his writings are Harijana Keertanalu, (1935). Nakka Venkata Reddy born on 4 January



1892 at Mummidivaram Sivarupalli Palem in Amalapuram Taluk East Godavari District. He was a teacher-manager at Komoona Palli (1909), later appointed as teacher in Adi-Andhra school at Mummidivaram. He had close connections with the non-Brahman leadership of the Justice Party and movement. He encouraged a lot of Dalit youth to join the movement, including, Pamu Rama Murthy and Eeli Vadapalli. He was a member of the executive council of East Godavari Adi-Andhra Mahajana Sabha from 1937 to 1942.<sup>10</sup>

6. Bhoi-Bheemanna (b.1911) Boyi Bhemanna is a living legend of the Dalit intellectuals. He graduated (1936) from P.R. College, Kakinada and B.Ed. at Rajahmundry (1937), was associate editor for Dalit journal Jayabheri. He published nearly 50 works including Paaleru (a farm boy) 1940), Ragavashistam, Kooli Raju (The labour king (1947), Jaana Paduni Jaabulu (1940), and many more. In his poetry Bheemanna pleaded for social equality<sup>11</sup>

Around the neck of the powerful Indian Nation  
Caste, religion are the hangman's ropes  
Destroy the guile of caste and religion  
Eradicate the human inequalities

7. B.S. Murthy (1906) is the best example of the emergence of Dalit Political articulation and mobilization.<sup>12</sup> He was educated at Rajahmundry and at Madras, elected secretary of Andhra Pradesh Harijan Sevak Sangh from 1940-49, electoral member of Madras Legislative Assembly in 1937 and Minister of Industries and Labour; later became Deputy Minister in Nehru's Cabinet. He also took part in national movement. He established a paper called Navajeevana (New life). He has been a catalyst in causing socio-economic mobility among dalits during the early decades of independence. As a political activist he took positive steps for the spread of education and employment advancement among dalit youth.

In addition to above literary works the emergence of dalit journals in the 1930's played a significant role in creating awareness among dalit masses. They articulated and highlighted dalit issues and kindled their consciousness. The main periodicals include. *Jayabheri* of Kusuma Dharmanna *Adi-Andhra* of Didla Pullayya, *Veera Bharathi* of Jala Rangaswamy, *Navajeevana* (a new life) of B.S. Murthy, *Harijana* of Vundru Subba Rao and the *Jeevana Jyothi* of Chuttumalla Venkataratnam. The writings of Dalit intelligentsia played a major role in bringing about unity and a feeling of oneness, and self-respect. They helped to establish an egalitarian society and create a vision for the future.

Dalit feminist writing also became a part of Adi-Andhra Movement. The example of Jala Mangamma (1909) is quite interesting. Along with her husband, Jala Rangaswamy she worked for dalit upliftment and contributed for dalit literature.



Influenced by Gandhian nationalist thought she worked as a teacher and taught in the night schools. She established Harijana Mahila Sangam and fought against untouchability. She also established hostels for dalit girls during 1928-31. She authored few novels and also edited a paper. In her works she dealt with the realities of caste dynamism of patriarchy and the peculiarities of dalit women's oppression. Her writings also explore the elementary aspects of dalit feminism.

Dalit intelligentsia had good knowledge of and insight into the life experiences of the masses about whose problems they wrote: their thoughts and feelings were fused with those of the masses. The subject matter for their works was provided by the everyday life experience and existential problems of the dalit masses. These writers, who found inexhaustible raw material in the society and community in which the and the masses were born, shaped it into a realistic literary representation. The main characteristic feature of dalit literature was its contemporaneity and realistic presentation. The savarna scholars who depicted dalit problems in their writings were guided neither by the philosophical and ideological tradition of the bhakti saint-poets nor by the liberation ideology and philosophy of Phule and Ambedkar. The dalit scholars critiqued the brahmanical social order as well as untouchability. In this sense it can be said that the dalit intellectuals of the pre-independence period were the forerunners to the contemporary dalit literary and cultural movements in the state. The distinctiveness in Dalit literature lay in the fact that there are certain ideas that were intrinsic to Dalit literature. The foremost realities that they propound are self-respect, the ideal of humanism, equality, and liberty. Those were some of the important facts regarding Dalit literature and Dalit writings as an instrument of liberation. Throughout history they have been searching for their roots and trying to create unity among themselves, which is why for them, generating history or writing literature is a self-liberating process. Dalit intellectual assertion contested the dominant brahmanical narratives and perceptions of their untouchable identity by emphasizing the purity and distinctiveness of their lives and demanding social equality. The writing of Bhagyareddi Varma and Bhoi Bheemanna are particularly note worthy in this regard of their of their

However, Dalit intellectuals did not accept their exclusion. A Dalit Telugu poet who wrote a long poem called '*Gabbilam*', the '*Bat*' (Chamgadar in Hindi), in which he narrated the oppressive social conditions of Dalits rejected the rationale of untouchability. He cautioned the Dalits not to go to the priests and let their words be heard by them but to address their words directly to God. The poet accepted that the Dalits were outside the social organization and now they wanted to be a part of it and to be included in the larger social organization. The Dalit communities of Andhra Pradesh refused to be addressed as Scheduled Castes, Depressed Castes, Outcastes etc., by the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They resisted the usage of such terminologies attributed to them. Claiming themselves to be the original inhabitants of this land, they began calling themselves as '*Adi Andhra Mahasabha*'. The awareness among the Dalits for asserting their demands for equality was noticed



as early as 1920's. Dalit literature was produced in Andhra particularly from 1930's onwards and this was also the time when the Gandhian liberation movement for Dalits had started. However, the majority of Dalits rejected being called as 'Harijan', the name conferred to them by Gandhi. Therefore, majority of the Adi Andhra movement activists followed the ideology of Dr. Ambedkar rather than Gandhiji. Kusumadharmana, a popular Dalit poet played an important role in popularizing further the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar through his popular booklets of long poems, short stories and essays. With the help of these literatures, he propagated an alternative vision and an alternative view of history. In one of his poems he mentioned that unless the social oppression was eradicated, there couldn't be freedom during the post Independence period.

### **From Adi-Andhras to Dalits: Dalit Articulation in Post-Independent Andhra**

In recent years growing incidents of murder, arson, rape etc, perpetrated against dalit masses by the dominant upper castes indicates a complex and diverse pattern.<sup>13</sup> Yet one thing is clear viz., the increasing assertion and awakening among dalits about their rights and quest for equality has become intolerable to the upper castes. The formation of Adi-Andhra Mahasabha (1917) and Dalit Mahasabha (1985) are the two important landmarks in the history of dalit liberation in modern Andhra. The issues raised by these movements pertaining to self respect, democratization of civil and political society and emancipation continued to pose a serious challenge to the post - colonial state in India. As is well known, instead of resolving the problem of caste discrimination and oppression, untouchability and caste violence the political leadership of this country is subverting the constitutional and administrative apparatus. In Andhra Pradesh upper caste atrocities against dalits were intensified on the eve of independence and – formation of the Indian Republic. In this presentation I will examine the socio political context and the social roots of violence during the post- independence period. Though perpetration of uppercaste violence against dalits in rural Andhra is not a new phenomenon its extent and intensity began to grow since the 1950s. The climax of caste conflict was witnessed by the ghastly massacre of dalits in Karamchedu (1985) and Chundururu (1991). Let me briefly list the incidents of upper caste violence against dalits in A.P.

#### **Pre-Karamchedu (1985) Uppercaste Violence Against Dalits<sup>14</sup>**

Place of Incident	Reason and Nature of Incident
1. Haribanda and Makannapuram, 1950	Dalits drew water from common (Vishakapatnam district) well on "Harijan Day".
2. Appikatla, 1950 (Guntur district)	Agriculture labour demanded wage rise.
3. Kasukurru	Dalit couple (Doctor) went in Marriage procession thru Main Street in a car.
4. Kalvacherla	A Dalit Woman was tortured for Drinking water from a public well



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| 5. Sambararam<br>(Kurnool District)      | Caste Hindus objected to the construction of a community hall in the dalit locality, which was close to a public pathway. In the attack, a dalit was killed and a couple of haystacks were burnt. |
| 6. Govindpet<br>(Nizamabad district)     | A dalit woman was beaten for suspected robbery.   |
| 7. East Godavari                         | One dalit was killed and six other brutally attacked when they wanted to enter into a Temple.   |
| 8. Atmakur                               | A dalit boy was beaten to death on suspicion of theft.  |
| 9. Nimmakur<br>(Krishna district)        | Two dalit youth were tortured to death on suspicion of theft  |
| 10. Ramannapalli                         | Dalits were beaten and their locality was burnt. Because they refused to work for low wages and demanded increase.  |
| 11. Chinaogirala                         | one dalit was murdered and 20 Krishna injured because wastelands were granted to them by government.  |
| 12. Kanchikacharla<br>(Krishna district) | one dalit was burnt to death on suspicion of theft and was roasted alive  |

The Illay Perumal Committee (1969) and the sample survey in 1975 revealed that in rural Andhra caste discrimination was rampant. Two-glass system in Hotels/teashops has been quite common. The dominant upper castes, as landowners and employers of labourers, thus exerted considerable power over the dalits. In the villages majority of dalit agricultural labourers and poor peasants/tenants were dependent upon the rich Kamma and Reddy/tenants were dependent upon the rich Kamma and Reddy peasantry. Whenever the class demands like wage dalit communities articulated increase, they are subjected to caste oppression like social boycott and denial of access to village economic resources. The dominant rich peasantry also did not tolerate any upward mobility among the dalits. Whenever dalit families acquired some wasteland, house-sites and other land grants from government the caste Hindu rich peasantry subjected them to physical attacks. The struggle for wage increase and land distribution by dalits resulted in retaliation from the dominant caste peasantry in the form of abuse, harassment, molestation of women and destruction of property. Dalits became easy targets for trivial accusations of theft and witchcraft. There was no dearth of instances of caste discrimination in terms of preventing their entry into temples, taking drinking water from public wells and tanks, denial of sharing of cups in the tea shops, etc., The perpetration of violence against dalits by the upper castes is closely related to the socio-economic and political domination of the rich peasantry in the countryside. The growing assertion of dalits for the actualisation of the concept of citizenship, mass literacy as the basis of new civil life and the social/spatial mobility as new principle of social life invited



victimization by the dominant caste peasantry. The concern of them for social mobility, education and diversification of occupation was consciously negated by the dominant castes. The unabated caste violence against dalits in the Andhra countryside is a clear proof of this.

The Dalits of today had moved to the center-stage and unlike in the past they could not be taken for granted. They were creating new identities both in civil and political society and in such changing circumstances they had become more assertive and were demanding freedom and equality from the society. For the Dalits, freedom meant equality, according to a Telugu poet. Equality is freedom. Dalits had started organizing themselves and had formed association's way back in 1890's, long before Gandhiji started campaigning for their uplift in 1932. Unfortunately, despite efforts made by both Dalit and non-Dalit groups to bring them in to the mainstream, instances of atrocities on them, whether big or small, are going on unabated.

In the 1980's, the Adi-Andhras began to associate themselves with the term 'Dalit'. Dalit Mahasabha was formed in 1985 after a cruel incident took place in which six Dalits were butchered, as they demanded access to public wells and village tanks.<sup>15</sup> An upper caste person objected to a Dalit woman washing clothes at the public tank. When she resisted, the entire Dalit area was attacked in which six Dalit youth were murdered. In 1991 another incident took place in which a dalit youth went to a Cinema Hall and purchased an upper class ticket. While sitting, his leg accidentally touched the body of an upper caste boy. He was given a sound thrashing by the upper caste boy. The incident sparked off a series of events that led to the butchering of another 21 Dalits. Thus these kinds of oppression gave rise to a new kind of awareness among Dalits that was not seen earlier. From untouchables to Harijan, to Adi-Andhras, and then to Dalits, they formed different identities at different phases of history. Today an alternative history has emerged which has been rejected by the mainstream historians. In the mainstream history, the heroes of Dalit communities were depicted as bandits and dacoits. In retaliation, the Dalits have now started asserting themselves by rewriting their own history and proving to the world that they were rulers at one point of time in history. This period is also witnessing the emergence of various revolutionary ideas that is paving the way for various movements such as the Naxalite movement, which was essentially a Dalit movement, as 90% of the Naxalites were either Dalits or from Bahujan lower caste/communities. All this is an indication of their increased assertiveness. Due to the growing social movement, the literature, too, has moved to a different context. The Dalits of today are not ready to accept sympathy. They want to express themselves freely to articulate their own vision. In the post-1980's period in modern Andhra especially "dalit identity indeed became the foundation for the formation of a new politics, raising a new set of issues and mobilizing all dalit castes collectively under a single umbrella. The core issue of refashioning a pure, 'untouched' identity remained, but most significant contribution of this new politics [and articulation]



lay in the emergence of a dalit identity as a *foundational category* for social and political organization of knowledge, lives and agendas".<sup>16</sup>

Today the Dalits are questioning the politics of silence. They are questioning how it is that hardly anything has been said or written in the mainstream literature or in the history about Dalit culture and literature. They question and reject narratives and categories constructed by the upper caste Hindus. It has not only meant to contest the dominance of upper caste authority but also to question and reject the notions of purity and pollution attached to them, their identity, history and culture by the upper castes. The dalit intellectuals ask why has no cognizance been taken of the emerging consciousness in their community? It is precisely to prove their resistance and to sensitize the Dalit community that the Dalits have created their own literature, which is humanistic; it is about self-reliance, and self-confidence. Even today Dalits are talking in terms of democratic participation. They want to make a formal democracy a real democracy. This is the kind of urge that is growing among the community and the facts need to be recorded and documented in this direction.

#### **Incidents of violence against dalits by caste Hindus in Post-karamchedu Period (1985-1991)<sup>17</sup>**

##### **Place of Occurrence**

1. Karamchedu  
(Prakasham, dist.)
2. Hasnapur  
(Adilabad, dist.)
3. Neerukonda  
(Guntur, dist.)
4. Gudiada  
(Vizianagaram, dist.)
5. Dontali  
(Nellore, dist.)

##### **Nature of the Incident**

Six dalits killed and three dalit women raped in a mass assault by hundreds of forward caste men of the Kamma caste. A Politically active son-in-law of the then Chief Minister, N.T. Rama Rao belongs to this Village.

Reddy landlords closely related to the MLA, Adilabad, killed Adilabad, Killed two youth of the dhobi and barber. Castes on these two days respectively, for refusal to procure a prostitute on their demand.

One elderly dalit murdered in mob attack by in a the Kamma community, close relatives of the then health minister in the AP Government.

One dalit labourer killed in a dispute over a small patch of tank small patch of tank-bed land by a mob of backward caste farmers led by a forward caste (Raju) Congress leader.

One person of backward caste (Golla) killed in a mob attack by Kammas. He was instrumental in organizing labourers.



6. Chirala  
(Prakasam, dist.)  
A Principal witness in the Karamchedu case, an elderly dalit Women by name Alisamma, murdered by the Karamchedu killers.
7. Bandlapalli  
(Chittoor, dist.)  
Four dalits beaten and stabbed to death in an assault by a group assault by a group of Reddy and other forward caste men in a dispute over half an acre of cultivable waste.
8. Kondavatikallu  
(Krishna, dist.)  
A dalit farm servant killed by Kamma landlord for disobedience
9. Beernakallu  
(Nellore, dist.)  
A dalit, upsarpanch of the village, killed by goondas hired by goondas hired by forward caste TDP men for having worked against them in elections.
10. Gokarajupalli  
(Krishna, dist.)  
Dalit labourer killed by youth of Kamma landlord families for Coming in the way of their harassment of women.
11. Tandutur  
(Prakasam, dist.)  
A Dalit women raped and set on fire and killed by a TDP goon of Kamma caste.
12. Jabbargudem  
(Rangareddy, dist.)  
A dalit killed in a mass assault at the behest of a Reddy landlord Dalits of this area have organised and fought for land, wages, Etc.
13. Pippara  
(West Godavari, dist.)  
Dalit killed in a mass assault by forward castes (Rajus) directed by a local Congress leader. Dalits had protested against molestation of dalit women by Raju youth.
14. Chinakada  
(Vizianagaram dist.)  
Four tribals, father and three sons, killed in mass attack by Savarna Hindus at the behest of a liquor contractor, for illicitly brewing and selling liquor.
15. Mandadam  
(Guntur, dist.)  
Two Erukala tribals abducted, tortured and killed by man of fishing contractor for catching and selling fish on the sly.
16. Pulivendula  
(Cuddapah, dist.)  
More than 150 houses of Erukala tribes people set on fire and detonated by mob of savarnas led by village sarpanch and Congress (I) leader, Y.S. Raja Reddy, father of prominent Congressmen Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy.
17. Nakkalampeta  
(Krishna, dist.)  
Dalit farm servant murdered by youth of landlord's household on suspicion of intimacy with a woman of the house.
18. Jeerupalem  
(Srikakulam, dist.)  
About 180 houses of fishing community set on fire by mob organized by prominent Congress (I) BC leader, big



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| 19. Gutlapadu<br>(West Godavari, dist.)         | landlord, former minister and former Chairman, Zilla Parishad by name Gorle Sriramulu Naidu. The fishing people were fighting people for return of 70 acres of their land grabbed by him.  |
| 20. Reddypalli<br>(Rangareddy, dist.)           | Two dalits killed in a mass assault by forward caste (Kapu) men numbering 200, for questioning their dominance. Erukala peasants burnt to death on pretext of sorcery by Reddy landlord close to local MLA for questioning the latter's dishonesty in a land deal. |
| 21. Kothapulavandlapalli<br>(Anantapur, dist.)  | Dalit burnt alive by a mob of Reddy and other castes for his rebellious attitude.  |
| 22. Vetlapalem<br>(East Godavari, dist.)        | Nearly hundred houses of dalits set on fire and destroyed by Kamma landlords-cum-mill owners in connection   |
| 23. Kaspā Gadabavalasa<br>(Vizianagaram, dist.) | Four tribals and a harijan killed by a mob of caste Hindus in connection with a land dispute involving 18 acres of land.   |
| 24. Chillakallu<br>(Krishna, dist.)             | A dalit SI of Police shot himself dead unable to bear the casteist to bear the casteist harassment of the forward caste (Kapu) CI, his immediate superior.   |
| 25. Moodurallipalli<br>(Kurnool, dist.)         | Dalit labourers beaten to death by Reddys for protesting against harassment of his wife by a Reddy.  |
| 26. Ambaripet<br>(Adilabad, dist.)              | A backward caste (Boya) farm – servant shot dead by his land-lord, G Narayan Reddy, Congress (I) leader, former MP, former Zilla Parishad Chairman and big landholder.   |
| 27. Chunduru<br>(Guntur, dist.)                 | 17 dalits massacred by a large mob of Reddy and some Kapu men in a savage attack as finale to a month-long period of conflict. An argument between a dalit youth and upper castes in a cinema Hall led to this massacre.   |

The above incidents make it amply clear that in post-independent India, dalits had to pay a heavy price for asserting and demanding their civil, democratic and constitutional rights. Most of the above incidents clearly reveal that in post-independent India, dalits have had to pay a heavy price for asserting their civil and constitutional rights. Most of the caste Hindu atrocities on dalits centered around the right of access to public wells, tanks, educational institutions, social dignity and equality (marriage processions along the streets, wearing neat clothes, chappals, etc.). Caste violence was also related to agrarian relations, i.e., access to grazing land, grants of government wastelands, demand for an increase in wages, etc. The



life of dalits was thought to be value less and hence they were put to death on the mere suspicion of a theft. The Dalits accused were not even allowed to prove their innocence or exercise their legal/constitutional rights. The dominant upper castes brazenly took the law into their own hands and meted out punishments to dalits. The extra-legal and constitutional authority and socio-economic power of the upper caste rich was demonstrated in order to force the dalits to accept and respect their dominance in the villages. During 1990's the press and various enquiries/surveys in Andhra Pradesh revealed that the evil of untouchability continued to be extensively practiced and dalits were defenseless against atrocities committed on them since police and revenue officials tended to support upper castes. On the floor of the State Assembly legislative members mentioned numerous instances of caste discrimination against dalits such as abuse, harassment, molestation of women, disconnection of power supply to dalit colonies for protesting against discrimination and social boycott. It was also mentioned that there was no dearth of instances of temple entry to dalits. The practice of preventing dalits from drinking water from public taps, wearing footwear before upper castes and surrendering their seats in buses was prevalent throughout the State. "Even at a tea-stall near the MLA's hostel in Hyderabad, the weaker sections were forced to drink tea outside."<sup>18</sup>

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# SILENCES IN HISTORY: THE WORLD OF OUTCASTE SACRED PROSTITUTES

Priyadarshini Vijaisri

Sacred prostitution evokes exotic imagery of the Orient: temple, dance, music, eroticism and affluence.<sup>1</sup> The custom was widespread in rural regions of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh till the 1980's when these state governments passed legislation declaring the custom illegal. Extensive research on South India has explored ideological and structural issues complicating the discourse about the ideal of South Indian femininity and specifically those relating to the custom of sacred prostitution. The postcolonial context in which this custom has been investigated restrained the handling of sensitive issues as sex, caste and gender. However disturbing and even embarrassing silences continue to prevail in any quest to explore issues of sexuality in caste societies. Similarly the representation of these women in academic discourses has been obscuring a critical understanding of the custom by an inherent inertia to invoke issues of sexuality and oppression in a caste oriented economy given the fact that these women belonged to untouchable /outcaste communities.

The paper focuses on a specific category of sacred prostitutes, known as *jogini/jogati*, *basavi*, *murali*, usually drawn across discreet outcaste communities in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, the paper attempts to explain how nationalist pursuit of the classical, in response to and as a critique of the colonial cultural supremacy, has lead to spiritualization of the East, which in turn has blurred the material realities in caste societies. Secondly it seeks to delineate sexual sites in caste societies to explore how the custom is interwoven with issues of cultural hegemony and caste economy. Thirdly, it tries to reconstruct the sexual behaviour in local traditions to reflect on how popular consciousness is oriented and its implications on historical writing in the post colonial context. However, this attempt limits itself at seeking to initiate a serious dialogue on contentious issues that have further been utilized to perpetrate notions of inferiority of cultures at the periphery, reinforcing moral superiority of dominant castes, in the post colonial context, both at the popular and academic levels. The inevitable eclectic approach of the paper is related to the very nature of issues addressed in the paper as also the fact that it deals with a regional tradition that lacks a strong textual tradition and is based on a rich oral tradition. Thus this ethno historical approach draws from a variety of sources ranging from archival and textual sources to interviews, personal observation and surveys.

## In Pursuit of the Classical

Voicing the dilemma, in writing on a volatile and intimate issue as sex, Tapi Dharma Rao reflects the contemporary academic sensibilities in reconstructing histories centered on sexuality and religion. "I know that what I say is going to be



hard to bear, it will not be tolerated by many and it would hurt many. It was precisely due to this, I restrained from publishing this piece of work, though I was persistently insisted by well wishers to do so,"<sup>3</sup> says the author in *Devalayala Mida Butu Bommalenduku* (why erotic pictures on the temples?), scripted in 1936, a historical context in which the contentious issue of sex and religion centering around the temple women was vociferously debated. For he proposed an alternative vision for the reformist entangled with the dilemma of the origin of the 'obnoxious' custom, where in sex was central to Hindu culture and tradition and was a great activity, and pure offering. Musing those poignant words of academic confession, tinged with earnest appeal for serious dialogue and critical cultural introspection on what was a regional tradition, one finds those pleas mocking the post-colonial subject; and reluctance to recognize, debate issues of sexuality, swept by the collective cultural amnesia. However, the contemporary historical context necessitates a genuine debate on sexuality linked as it is to community identities, nation-building, and realization of goals of a democratic society.

The nineteenth century witnessed a gradual evolution of the ideal of the 'native' women as a transcendent Oriental construct, whereby various customary practices like sati, female infanticide and child marriage evoked a sense of horror.<sup>4</sup> However, it was the custom of sacred prostitution that poignantly reinforced the ideological construct aggregating it by "gross immorality" what in popular colonial imagery was the sexually consumed East. While within this abstraction or objectification, the 'Hindu' female itself lost her identity women outside this classical/Hindu frame almost be inconspicuous on the lack to amuse the colonial observers in search of the unique, exotic and oriental fantasies.

The information generated by the Orientalists, missionaries and official ethnographers provided data for emerging discipline of comparative studies on philology, religion, and culture which sifted the caste Hindu cultures categorized as classical from the 'popular'.<sup>5</sup> In their quest for the philosophical, which resulted in the accumulation of caste Hindu texts in European libraries, certain contempt for the popular as a domain of crude, primitive and barbarious practices was gaining momentum was to have implications on the emerging field of Indology and Asian Studies.<sup>6</sup> Within this frame the custom of dedicating girls to south Indian temples/deities reported by the official ethnographers and missionaries were fitted into evolutionist framework in the emerging discipline of comparative religion that was based on a universal and generalizing framework.<sup>7</sup> The focus can be linked to the colonial fetish for the textual, institutional and 'classical,' customs that could be authenticated by the structural embeddedness and the legitimacy accorded to it in 'high' caste Hindu culture.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the sacred prostitute simply rendered in early accounts as nautch girl, was in the classical model, representative of the hierodule spatially identified with the Tamil temple tradition.<sup>9</sup> The 'classical' was privileged as the potential site that could be empirically verified, with a rich ideological legacy, but also politically volatile. Further, it had the potential to titillate colonial imagination



while simultaneously reinforcing its moral supremacy. For instance, works catering to evangelical organizations and the official circles like Abbe J.A. Dubois, to curious colonial public and organizations orienting colonial imagination like Katherine Mayo<sup>10</sup> to academic concerns like Frazer,<sup>11</sup> Briffault<sup>12</sup> or Farquhar<sup>13</sup> along with the proliferation of travel accounts have a great influence in the reconstruction of the classical ideal offering various ideological expositions. To a certain extent, it was the Tamil temples, or for instance 'the Peninsular or Tanjore School' that dominated the popular imagination in accounts of the dancing girls or slaves of the gods.<sup>14</sup> This is despite the fact that ethnographic accounts, eventually in the later decades documented the custom in its classical form as prevalent in adjacent regions of Mysore, Travancore and the Telugu speaking regions of Madras presidency. Significantly these documentations lead to discoveries of varying manifestations of the custom with diversity in ritual and form that were simply transposed into a classificatory scheme that is homogenizing.<sup>15</sup>

Within this vast body of discrete 'facts', the evidence of 'low caste' 'vulgar' sacred prostitute, structurally ambiguous, failed to evoke academic interest. Such traditions could logically be subsumed under the notion of aberrations or popular Hinduism. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, western women increasingly interested in issues relating to 'native' women, both political and cultural, enlarged their feminist agenda at home. The nature of intervention determined their perception and interpretation of the Oriental women, intermittently producing conflicting views.<sup>16</sup> Actively associating with caste-Hindu reformist and revivalist movements, an increasing number of western women were drawn into representation of 'classical' and native theological issues at home.<sup>17</sup> However, the process had to reconcile between nature of native social customs and western ideas. Simultaneous, this knowledge was transformed by active participation and interpretation, which was disseminated through lectures, associations,<sup>18</sup> and periodicals<sup>19</sup> and further fuelled by imperial ethos.<sup>20</sup> Even the politically blatant attacks on the custom were foregrounded on the 'observed' facts, that such females were drawn from 'culturally superior' castes like the Brahmins.<sup>21</sup> Mother India with a brief and ambiguous account on 'devadasis' within a sexualized colony was acclaimed as the most authentic record of the condition of Indian women.<sup>22</sup> This 'fascinating' account of the colony lay bare, along with monstrous cultural behavior; "the university of sexual vice in its most extravagant forms" as symptomatic of the sexual pathology of the native inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> Such delineations are reinforced in contemporary writing, that usually though from 'poor families', girls who were initiated as slaves of god were drawn from 'good caste'.<sup>24</sup> What resulted perhaps unconsciously was detachment from customs and processes affecting the cultures at the periphery. Though moving away from such highly 'evolved' and 'classical' models, the missionaries drew attention to the 'popular' manifestations of the custom among the lower and outcaste communities.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, Abbe Dubois's meticulous observations underline the need to distinguish such 'lower' caste women from temple women in the South.<sup>26</sup> The response provoked by such virulent propaganda, ridiculing the sexual personality



of the caste-Hindu, had to be contained in the politically crucial decades of the early twentieth century by deploying nationalist feminists to postulate a native version of cultural issues so intensely propagated at home and orienting colonial culture.<sup>27</sup> With a measure of success the issue was stalled and reverted by assertion that the custom was confined to a 'minority', it was an aberration and hence was not as pervasive as the vicious 'drain inspector's report' had concocted.<sup>28</sup> However, the counter propaganda that resorted to spiritualizing the East in a way veiled material realities and institutions affecting the cultures at the periphery. This was reinforced in the legislative discourses across the region since the early twentieth century.

Majority of studies have sought to fervently identify a pristine tradition thereby underplaying the deeper sexual dimension. Explication of a religious customs, pervasive phenomenon manifest in the 1980's had to be resolved ideologically. The earliest sketches fore-grounded this custom on the presumptions of chastity, virginity as the pristine value that modeled the prototype, which eventually 'degenerated' into abominable custom overtime. The hegemonic influence of this ideological construct continues to exercise a pervasive influence as historical commonsense as also across disciplinary boundaries.<sup>29</sup> The lack of historical data on sexual behaviour within the custom has fuelled in impressionist, anachronistic and simplistic assumptions in the existing literature. Thus, a custom that is interwoven with the structural and ideologically, the sub systems within them, the public and private realms, cannot be reduced to over simplistic and historical presumptions, which are embodied in the theory of aberration.

### SEXUAL SITES IN CASTE SOCIETIES

The idea of purity and pollution that lend to creation of mutually exclusive communities, provide a ritual scheme that enables interaction between the two interdependent blocks. Several tasks that are defiling and physically excruciating are performed by the untouchable castes on which the caste economy and its purity itself is based; be it labour, scavenging or leatherwork. The outcastes, on the other hand, are dependent on the caste communities for their very survival. It is within this material context that the norms of purity are rigid and insurmountable. But in the ritual and the sexual domain the norms are frequently inverted and transgression ensures the hegemony of the caste communities. The conflict between touchability and untouchability is a persistent undercurrent anxiety in caste society. It would be no exaggeration to note that the caste complex is extremely sexualized encompassing the both public and the private space, be it the ritual or the secular domain.<sup>30</sup> Rape, mutilation of breasts and vagina, parading women naked etc. crucially sexualizes caste violence. Within this context, caste Hindu woman is not only sacralised but de-eroticised and is secluded into a space that is beyond the gaze and guarded by male kinship networks across, from the family to the community. Driven by aggression and violence, the sexual behaviour culminates to what can be loosely defined as caste pathology. It recreates a space; outcaste space that is consumed by



it and in turn reproduces the hegemony of the caste groups.<sup>31</sup> Thus sexual violence, in its extreme form ruptures the outcaste private space thereby deranging its kinship organization. However, in the process, the outcaste masculinity is brutalized, and alienated of human essence as a victim of caste pathology. What is relevant is that while caste masculinity frequently trespasses the outcaste space and transgresses the sexual norm, it is the caste Hindu women who nourishes the purity of caste Hindu private space and epitomizes the ideals of caste behaviour. On the contrary the outcaste masculinity is emasculated, and outcaste femininity sexualized, and this inverts the norms of pollution by being drawn into intimate sexual relations with caste Hindu men. The cultural implications of sacred prostitution can be explored within the realm of the private space of the outcaste communities culminating in what could be termed as a state of anarchy and general destabilization of the outcaste space, culturally.

The term sacred prostitution, though a narrow term, is relevant for it enables distinguishing a specific mode of sexual behaviour, an encompassing sphere of custom characterized by intricate relationship between sex and ritual and belief system in religious structures across various regional traditions. Secondly it implies a certain model of sexual behavior sanctioned by such tradition. Such sexual behaviour beyond marital sphere is condoned by members of various communities within the caste complex, those from which women were drawn as also those that had access to such women. It recognizes the fact that emphasis of the erotic identity of the women does not by implication undermine the artistic and ritual roles of the women while on the contrary conforms to the traditional nomenclature.

Women offering sexual services, often indiscriminately, to strangers for a certain limited period, specifically until they tie the marital bond, are found in various cultures.<sup>32</sup> Such practices have been associated with the custom of sacred prostitution too. What is pertinent in this context is that, this witnessed the corresponding changes in family values like chastity that accompanied monogamous pairing or the monogamous family. To term this practice as symptomatic or even more synonymous to sacred prostitution is problematic. Yet, the scope this lent to a milieu witnessing material and ideological developments, subsequently affecting relations between sexes as well as structures needs to be explored. With increasing rigid structural basis, sexual ties and corresponding changes in the religious values, this practice lent scope for another identity for women who could be permanently "liberated" from the monogamous ideal. Such liberated women significantly endowed a religious identity, could perhaps be identified as the precursor of the sacred prostitute.

Thus, the outcaste women dedicated to the deity were endowed ritual roles integral to religious customs of household, the temple and the village. These ritual specialists were "traditionally indispensable for conducting important rites to propitiate the goddess" as the priestess. Symbolic of auspiciousness, their presence during domestic ceremonies and festivals is marked, 'to bestow good crops, promote



human and animal fertility as well as welfare of the whole community".<sup>33</sup>

The custom of sacred prostitution can be juxtaposed to the realm of the secular to unravel how feminine sexuality is modeled and interwoven with issues of hegemony. In this context, two primary sites that control female sexuality can be discerned while the family or the household is the primary site of power at the micro level within the community or caste, the temple emerges as the primary site of authority at the macro and the structural level. All legitimate social values, relationships and models of interaction are symbolically reinforced in the temple. The issues of feminine identity and sexuality as negotiated, given the conflicting social identities that come into play, need to be investigated for a critical understanding of sacred prostitution. This institution can be aptly located within the broader framework of the temple as the controller of female sexuality outside the domestic sphere. Such a perspective is imperative to take cognizance of the sacredness endowed on women who were essentially female prostitutes'. This category of women was endowed with a unique sacrosanct status and attributed ritually auspicious and divine qualities that were denied to women in the household/ domestic sphere.

M. Shama Rao notes a particular practice in the Mysore region related to the women charged of adultery were expelled from caste and were 'branded as prostitutes'.<sup>34</sup> While this practice symbolizes one mode of dealing with unchaste and unfaithful wives, certain records of the period point out to another mode of negotiating with tension. Enthoven described a specific custom among the Marathas wherein the married women and young unmarried women take refuge of the temple where in any earlier marital bonds are severed and the women "follow the occupation of a maid-servant in the temple, but their real occupation is that of public women; They are not scorned by the public."<sup>35</sup>

Francis Buchanan makes mention of a custom, in the Tuluva country, among the caste communities wherein a women seek liberation from normative sexual roles seek the refuge of the temple.<sup>36</sup>

Two characteristics of the customary practices mentioned above are, one, the initiative of woman, mostly married, to seek the protection of the temple by renouncing her marital bond and secondly, the collective decision of community along with the temple to free her from her marital bond. The temple regulated the woman's sexuality that would otherwise stray into irreligious union with men below her caste status. Norms for further sexual relations are subsequently patterned according to her caste identity. Further, the temple assumed a patriarchal control by employing her to perform certain tasks in the temple and also by imposing payment of a certain account at regular intervals. Thus, women outside the domestic sphere were regulated in accordance with the patriarchal control of the temple authority. Finally, these women, though engaged in sexual relations with multiple partners,



were not castigated as ordinary prostitutes.

The sacred prostitute symbolizes the synthesis of diverse religious traditions. The religious notion of fertility and sacred power attributed to women found vigorous representation in tantricism<sup>37</sup> though sexual rituals were not alien to Vedic religious practices. Consequently, tantras came to be recognized as authorities on religious matters and influenced the puranic rites. Smriti Samhitas<sup>38</sup> retained central tantric elements. It has been noted, "tantricism has survived and has been absorbed into the social matrix."<sup>39</sup> Hinduism's response to this phenomenon became apparent in the subsequent classification of tantric rituals into Dakshinis and Vamacharis. Dakshinas or right hand worshippers worship in accordance with puranic rituals, while Vamacharis are an esoteric religious-sect. Vama means Kama, or sex and acara means the mode of spiritual attainment or ritual practice.<sup>40</sup> It is in this context that Tapi Dharma Rao's posits the ritual as also the erotic identity of the Gudiseti.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, he elucidates how sexual symbolism permeated to foods that were especially cooked for ritualistic purpose. Instancing which he refers to sweets of the shape of Yoni distributed on the menstruation of a girl. Similarly illustrates several other festivals and customs with covert sexual symbolism having deeply influenced the lives of the people.

Delineating the ritual essence of sex he notes, "sex was a mahakarya (great activity), a praja seva (a public service) a maha bhakti (great devotion) and a pavitra aradhana (pure offering). As a result temples were institutes hosting sexual activity as a vital component of worship. It is in this context he argues that temples were sobanapu gadulu - strictly meaning a room that hosted the sexual communion of the newly wed immediately after their marriage. He thus depicts temples as essentially sexual sites. Further, he notes that women who indulged in such sexual services within the temple were highly respected. These women without marriage continued to serve god by prostituting and dedicated their earning to the temple. More significantly at their earlier stage, he notes, that they were known as Gudiseti."<sup>42</sup> Further he also writes about men who prostituted under religious sanction other than the sacred prostitutes. He notes that such men were hermaphrodites and endowed a distinct status in the religious sphere due to their dedication to religious activity. The other category of men who indulged in such cultic sexual practices and gave their offering to the god in the form of excessive sexual activity came to be revered as Panda, Pant, Panthu, or the Pundit.<sup>43</sup> Similarly Savi Savarkar teremity to intrude the sacral and private space of the Saundatti temple have made it possible to recover practices that almost reiterate Dhrama Rao's provocative statements.<sup>44</sup> Savrakar holds that in his two months sojourn in the temple sex within the temple was not uncommon. And that some priestly class did indulge into voyeurism on such occasions! He also professes that sex took place in the temple complex in the smaller shrines too and then the ritual of nagna puja, or the naked parade of the dedicated woman, were events when they exercised their choice as to who they could possibly have sexual relations with. The fact that this information needs to be



collaborated to gain a holistic view of the complex of events is undoubted but what is relevant is that it evokes the traditional notion of temples as a sexual site. However such intermittent bleak voices need to be acknowledged if only for the sheer intellectual curiosity into realms of invisibilised sexual behaviour.

### **The Sacred Space**

The most intriguing issue is that of the very legitimacy and the moral basis that sustains mutual 'co-existence' of the caste and outcaste communities within a system that is rigid and oppressive. How does the caste norm gain hegemony within the caste complex given the prevalence of a prominent ritual tradition among the outcastes that is not simply antagonistic but also potentially subversive? Perhaps, the outcaste religious practices can be linked to the repression of outcaste communities, who in an oppressed and powerless position, are polluted not only by the scavenging duties but also by the nature of their work, which is believed to bring them in contact with mysterious forces, be it leather work/ dealing with carcass, cremation grounds. In a physical world entailing a great deal of oppression, suppression and powerlessness, a religion that can transpose them to a world that is physically empowering could mean a realm that is inexplicable and beyond human comprehension, thereby involving the terrifying ritual practices of sacrifice, blood, internal organs of animals, flagellation or possession. It needs to be noted that not only do these terrifying rituals recreate awe and fear but simultaneously revitalizes the community as well, transposing them to a realm away from the day to day humiliation and suffering. For instance the outcaste ritual specialist, Matamma/ Matangi, periodically enacts a ritual that humbles, mocks the caste Hindus and virtually dares to pollute them shattering their claims to superiority. During initiation rites as also village festivals, for the gramadevtas, the Matangi acts as a divine mediator, recreating the vigour and terror of the dreaded goddess, "who is aroused, hot and fierce" whose spirit possesses her.

"She runs about among people, touching them with her stick, spurring toddy from her mouth all over them, and backing up against higher castes, even Brahmans, stand in line, as anxious to be spat upon and touched by her stick and her person as are the lowest.... as she rushes about spitting on those who under ordinary circumstances would almost chose death rather than to suffer such pollution. From a Madiga, she breaks into wild, exulting songs, telling of the humiliation to which she is subjecting the proud caste people. She also abuses them all thoroughly, and as in the worship of Bangaramma, they appear to accept it and not to be satisfied without a full measure of her invective.

After this ceremony she visits the homes of the Brahmans, and her visit does not appear to be a pleasant one for them. She comes into the courtyard and smears a pot with cow-dung, on which she places her basket. The inmates of the house at once fill the basket with food and cover the top with a layer of powdered rice. Then a small lamp is placed on top of this and lighted. This appears to be the nearest approach



to worship the Matangi receives. She then holds out a pot and asks for toddy. Water is usually brought instead and filling her mouth with this she again goes through the process of spattering them all. The women give their bodies, and the head woman gives her the cloth, which she is wearing. The men give her their scared threads; she then leaves the place, still singing her wild songs telling of the humiliation to which she has reduced the Brahmans".<sup>45</sup>

The ritual sacrifice of the buffalo prevalent through out the southern country preserves another such subversive tradition. A male buffalo, called Devara Potu/ Gajam Pothu i.e. devoted to the goddess, is brought before the image and its head cut off by the head Madiga of the town/village.<sup>46</sup> The blood is caught in a vessel and sprinkled over boiled rice, and then the head, with the right foreleg in the mouth, is placed before the shrine on a flat wicker basket, with rice and blood on another basket just below it." In some places, "Its neck is placed over a small pit, which has been dug to receive the blood, and entrails are taken out and placed in a pit with the blood. Their right leg is then cut off below the knee and put cross wise in the mouth, some fat from the entrails is placed on the forehead and a small earthenware lamp about as thick as a man's two hands, with a wick as thick as his thumb, is placed on the fat and kept there lighted, till the festival is over. Some of the blood and the entrails are then mixed with some boiled rice and placed in a new basket, with a Madigas, stripped naked, places on his head and takes them round the boundary of the village fields, accompanied by a washer man carrying a torch, and followed by a few of the villagers. He sprinkles the rice, blood, and entrails all round the boundary".<sup>47</sup> A More frenzied and violent acts could follow other animal sacrifice, for instance that of a lamb is mentioned as follows, "the intestines of the lamb...are put over the neck of a Mala, and its liver is placed in his mouth, while another Mala takes the basket rice soaked in blood and mixed with the entrails of the buffalo. A procession is then formed with these two weird figures in the middle. The man with the liver in his mouth is worked up into a state of frantic excitement and is insured by the goddess. He has to be held by men on either side of him, or keep fast with ropes, to prevent him rushing away; and all around him are the ryots, i.e., the small farmers, and the Malas, flourishing clubs and swords, and throwing limes into the air, to drive away the evil spirits. As the procession moves through the village, carries the basket sprinkles the rice soaked in blood over the houses to protect them from evil spirits, and falls down in a faint."<sup>48</sup> Elmore mentions a similar practice, "After the sacrifice of a buffalo has been accepted by Bangaramma, people dance like demons while the drums and horns keep up the wildest din. A strange custom is now observed. The Madigas, who are outcastes, begin to revile caste people, using the vilest language. They certainly are adepts at invective, and make good use of their opportunity. The caste people not only accept this berating, but they demand it. If the Madigas show any reluctance to begin caste people will beat them with ropes and sticks to compel them to perform their duty". Within this regional context the outcaste ritual specialists, conserve this tradition, ritually strip the Brahmins/



caste Hindus off their superiority, which is eventually proclaimed by exultation. This ritual stripping symbolizes the impotence of caste Hindu norms and the invincibility of the outcaste goddess.

The issue of sexual tension in caste complex is a undercurrent theme in several mythical narratives; the myth of Arundatti, that of the Brahmin woman tricked into marriage with an outcaste and the myth of the Mari sisters etc. reveal the anxiety with regard to the pollution, especially that of sexual intimacy between the touchable and untouchable castes, along with that of beef.

Simultaneously in a parallel mythical tradition, outcaste mythical cosmology, the dichotomy between the touchable woman and untouchable women on inversion of caste norms is apparent. Implicit in the myths is the fear of the mysterious rituals of the outcastes, the prowess of the uncontrolled femininity, of beef of outcaste masculinity and desire. These narratives thus charter the tribulations of the uncontrolled feminine, along with the 'other', outcaste women, and fused women who are defiled and thus are pollutants that are relegated to the margins of the caste complex. However the outcaste woman is a victim with a potential of polluting the purity of caste Hindus, though for no fault of hers, contradicts the saga of a Brahmin woman and the outcaste trickster.

"Once upon a time there lived a Rishi who had a fair daughter. A Chandala, i.e. an Outcaste, desired to marry her. He went to Kasi (Benares) in the disguise of a Brahman, where, under the tuition of a learned Brahman, he became well versed in the shastras (i.e. the sacred books), and learnt the Brahman modes of life. On his return he passed himself off for a Brahman and after sometime made offers to the Rishi lady, and somehow succeeded in prevailing upon her to marry him. She did so, her father also consenting to the match. They lived a married life for some time, and had children. One day it so happened that one of the children noticed the father stitch an old shoe previous to going out for a bath. This seemed curious, and the child drew the mother's attention to it. Then the mother, by virtue of her tapas (i.e. austerities), came to know the base trick that had been played upon her by her husband, and cursed him and her. The curse on her was that she should be born a Mari, to be worshipped only by low caste men. The curse on him was that he should be born a buffalo fit to be sacrificed to her, and her children should be born as sheep and chicken."<sup>49</sup>

Another version of a myth in the Telugu region deals with the anxiety to beef, along with the intimacy between touchable female and the untouchable male:



The Pariah brings his mother home disguised as a Brahmin widow, and brought her to his house, 'telling his wife that she was his mother and was dumb... lest her speech should betray them.' However the wife gets suspicious as she hears her mother-in-law asking her son if the sweet dish prepared was meat as it, 'looked like the entrails of the animal'. However she was eventually convinced of their low caste as she watched their conduct. On this she sets the house on fire, burns herself alive and emerges as a divine being with terrifying powers and threatens to destroy the village who had been part of the unholy act of violating the code of caste duty by being part of their marriage. She is only appeased on the promise that her husband would be sacrificed to her and the ritual of humiliation would be enacted periodically.<sup>50</sup>

The very involuntary mistake of the Brahmin woman contrasts that of the victim, outcaste matangi. While the latter succumbs to the fused identity the former seeks vengeance by destroying her outcaste husband, setting herself on fire, the ultimate purifier, and threatens the very survival of the village that is seen as having consented to such blunder. The outcaste is subject to periodical ritual humiliation by being sacrificed to her and by reminding the impure castes of such disastrous alliance.<sup>51</sup> However what is significant is that not only is caste Hindu femininity deified, by being installed as their goddess, but refusal to concede to the approval of caste Hindu male desire for outcaste female itself culminates into an ill fated of impurity and servitude. For instance Arundattia Madiga woman curses her lineage for their arrogance to protest intrusion of caste Hindu masculinity or reluctance to permit the rupturing of the outcaste private space by the "outsider" the Brahmin. The myth goes as follows.<sup>52</sup>

The Brahmin who seeks to absolve himself of his sins is in search of a woman with 'supernatural power' to transform sand into rice. On his failure to meet such woman among the caste Hindus eventually gets to the outcastes. Arunzodi, the madiga woman claims to have such miraculous power but expresses her dilemma, "I can do it, but I am of low birth. My father is wont to kill cows and eat them. My father is wont to kill cows and eat them. We are outcasts." As he persuades her she repeats, "When my elder brother comes home and see you, his wrath will be great, for we eat meat." Eventually she yields to his insistence and indeed transformed sand and iron pieces into rice. On this miracle the Brahmin expresses his desire to marry Arunzodi. This enraged family and the madiga community for "bringing a stranger into our households and our caste! Turn them out! Away with them!" As they resort to violence Arundatti by her miraculous powers "rose to heaven" and cursed them saying: "You shall be slaves of all. Though you work and toil, it shall not raise your condition. Unclothed and untaught you shall be, ignorant and despised from thenceforth!"

It is in the eventual appropriation of the outcaste woman and in moulding the outcaste private space to recreate the hegemony of the caste communities. In the caste complex, certain regional traditions evolve, synthesizing ritual beliefs and



practices of the caste and outcaste communities reinforcing the hegemony of the caste norms and beliefs as manifest in the custom of outcaste sacred prostitution. It is here that the outcaste space is sexualized linked to issues of outcaste duty, caste purity and the upholding the ideal of aggressive caste Hindu masculinity. Within this mythical cosmology the narratives are ambiguous on issues of eroticism and oscillate on notions of chastity, caste and outcaste femininity idealizing the aggressive identity of the caste Hindu male. The myths that lend a legitimacy to the custom of dedication of outcaste girls essentially symbolizes the process of consolidation of caste hegemony and emasculation of outcaste male in contrast to the aggressive sexual identity of the caste Hindu male be it within the family, community or the caste complex. Princess Renuka<sup>53</sup> and rishi Jamadagni are married in a swayamvara and live in a hermitage on the banks of the river Malaprabha. They beget five sons, of whom the youngest is Parashuram.<sup>54</sup> Renuka renounces worldly pleasures in devout service of her husband. Due to her chastity and purity, she gains miraculous powers (shakti), which is symbolized in the unique manner she fetched water from the river. Those special powers enable her to shape a pot from sand and carry it over her cobra simbi (a coil to balance the pot over the head). Once she sees the reflection of a gandharva coupe engaged in sensuous act and is disturbed aroused.<sup>55</sup> On experiencing worldly temptations, Renuka loses her shakti and fails to carry water to the hermitage. Jamadagni with his power visualizes this incident and is enraged. What follows subsequently is crucial, as this sequel of the incident has been a recurrent theme in local caste and outcaste mythology. It needs to be noted that the textual tradition lacks a need to pursue this issue and generally assumes that Renuka revealed enormous powers and was reinstated as a Shakti goddess. What follows subsequently is crucial, as this sequel of the incident has been a recurrent theme in local caste and outcaste mythology and a space for dynamic interpolations, especially in the oral tradition. This part is subject to contradictions and ambiguities as it deals with constructing the 'other', the 'polluted' within the dominant mythical cosmology.

Generally the sequel goes as follows; an enraged Jamadagni commands his son Parashuram to kill Renuka. Renuka had a female servant, Matangi (here an outcaste goddess.) On orders to kill his mother, Parashuram killed both his mother as well as the maidservant. Parashuram requests that his mother be restored to life. Significantly, due to darkness the heads of Renuka and Matangi get inter-changed. In the process of mutilation and restoration the heads of Renuka and Matangi were transposed. Thus, Matangi also came to be respected as a goddess<sup>56</sup> due to this physical interchange. Similar myths are prevalent in the Telugu-speaking region. The outcaste woman/ goddess who suffers on Renuka's mental infidelity belongs to the two dominant outcaste communities, the Mala and the Madiga. A Frenchman, Pierre Sonnerat, reported a similar myth in the 18th century from Tamilnad. Renuka is referred by the name of 'Mariatale'.<sup>57</sup> Here Parashuram 'runs in haste, but by a singular oversight he joined the head of his mother to the body of outcaste women who had been executed for her crimes'.<sup>58</sup>



Conversely within the Renulka/Yellamma myth related to the custom, two notions emerge prominently; unchaste caste Hindu wife is potentially destructive that signals disease, drought and chaos. While the erotic identity of the outcaste women is functional to contain such sexual aberration of the caste Hindu wife by assuming her mutilated identity and offering to share her conjugal identity. However, what is crucial is the sexual tension within the monogamous family is resolved by going into the exterior, the outcaste space. Significantly on dedication the identity of the women was inscribed by her non-conjugal sexuality as evident in the life cycle ceremonies and the complex of ideas that recreate such identity. Fundamentally the women were of consensus that they were simply known as *sule*, simply meaning a prostitute, other than *jogati* or *jogini* till a few years ago. The religious identity of the women legitimized their sexual behaviour and thus such relationships did not marginalize their ritual identity.

### **The Profane Zone: Untouchable Female and the Touchable Male**

Thus structural conflicts generate narratives of contestation embodied within the oral as also the textual tradition interwoven with the crucial process of cultural hegemony by the dominant caste groups, manifesting in the ritual realm. It is in this complex structuring of sexualities that the identity of the outcaste sacred prostitutes/ ritual specialists needs to be located. Studies on caste have singularly failed to explicate the sexual behaviour reproduced by such regional traditions and the general access that caste Hindu men have to outcaste women conversely to that of outcaste man. The structural analysis of caste have often elucidated the basic guiding features of the system, ideologically, institutionalized into endogamy, untouchability with explicit rules on commensality and conduct laying principles and measurements of ritual distances in different contexts. However the transgression of principle of purity and impurity is not pursued in this specific case though the principle is central to his structural analysis, nor is it interlinked to issues of untouchability, or hierarchy. Given the ambiguity on such issues, resulting for the manner in which issues in social sciences are framed, the intimate and crucial aspects of sexual behaviour have been rendered invisible blurring our vision on caste and outcaste interaction in such traditionally legitimized spaces.

Interestingly references to the 'aberrant' sexual practices in existing literature provide links to reconstruct the sexual practices within the custom. For instance It is noted that the custom resulted in a category of women who could live with her parents lead a "free sexual life with the castes of her own and with persons of the upper castes"<sup>59</sup> The initiated woman's erotic identity was inscribed by the ritual of dedication and thus available to the village community with customarily no right to deny sex to anybody who approached her. This customary sexual practices lead to a range of practices wherein sexual boundaries that defined access to the specific women were inscribed by community identity to simply individual relationships beyond the marital space.<sup>60</sup> The Madras Law Report, 1892, noted that on dedication the girl "is at liberty to have intercourse with men at pleasure"



almost amounting to prostitution. Significantly the distinction is recognized wherein it is added that "the Basavis seem in some cases to become prostitutes, but the language used by the witnesses generally points only to free intercourse with men, and not necessarily to receipt of payment for use of their bodies. In fact they acquire the right to intercourse with men, without more discredit than accrues to the men of their caste for intercourse with women who are not their wives."<sup>61</sup> Such relationship being characterized by uncertainty leading to a range of sexual relationships ranging from long-term ties of concubinage or temporary relationships, simply a night to a few days. As per certain traditions the dedicated girls could "remain all their life as a prostitute to the temple priests"<sup>62</sup> or be a concubine of the caste Hindus. While the women in the temple were often mistresses and concubines of the elite in the urban areas the outcaste sacred prostitute was sexually available to the village community.

One of the crucial life cycle ceremonies on initiation as sacred prostitutes was puberty rite known as Zulwa, Hennumaduvudu/hemm (in northern Karnataka) or Myla Patta (Andhra Pradesh). During this ceremony the sexual relation with the caste Hindu men was ritualized, usually the highest bidder, dominant landlord or simply following a hierarchy of privilege according to caste, and power relationships in the caste complex. According to reports from Andhra Pradesh in the 1990s' the ceremony of dedication of girls, usually below ten years, proceeds as follows.<sup>63</sup> Converting a jogin has two stages: the first pattam (or stage) and the second pattam (or stage).

At the first pattam, (called jogu patam) the local priest called pothuraju ties a "Mangal Sutra" or tali or a string of black beads around the neck of the girl. After performing the ritual the priest declares that she is married to the 'God' (from then onwards she becomes a sort of public property and anybody can claim right on her.

The second pattam (called Myla pattam) is held on her attaining puberty. This is the beginning of sexual assault on her. It is the prerogative of the 'Godfather' (the Landlord/headman) of the village to lay his hands on Jogin. If he is not willing, the next man in the hierarchy will be given preference. When the second patam is celebrated, the 'Jogin' is offered some ornaments, a new sari, flowers etc. Now the dedication is complete and total. Then she becomes the collective property of the village.

Instances of appropriating women for sole sexual services of specific communities, barring such communal rights to outsiders led to creation of a distinct identity of women. "The basavis were dedicated to serve exclusively the veerashaivas and to live under their care. The rules of conduct of the veerashaivas lay down that the basavi should not have the sexual relations with a Bhavi- a non-Lingayat." Any violation meant that the woman would lose the patronage of the entire community as also leading to the loss of her ritual identity, and spiritual value. "When a Basavi



was found to have sexual relations with a Bhavi she was deprived of her vessel and was prevented from collecting her livelihood from the veerashaivas. It also meant the loss of care and protecting from the veerashaiva community and becoming a common prostitute to sell her charms and body for monetary considerations. But the spiritual loss was still greater – becoming a prostitute of a Bhavis meant the definite loss of heaven, for if a Basavi served the Veerashaivas faithfully, it was believed that she would attain salvation. The philosophy of the Veerashaivas has been “Work is Worship”. Therefore sincere and devoted pursuit of one’s own profession of a Basavi was the prostitution. Hence she was expected to be faithful to the Veerashaivas as a prostitute and help herself to get heaven for herself.”<sup>64</sup>

It needs to be noted that almost all the communities in the locale, from the Brahmins, landed castes to the lower castes maintain relations with these women, according to the accounts by the jogatis themselves. Similarly, the non-Hindu community of Jains also was not averse to sexual relations with the women. Significantly, it needs to be noted that even Muslim men, in several Muslim dominant areas, had access to the women.

Significantly, a complex of beliefs among the communities also reinforces the erotic identity. Generally it is a popular belief among the peasant communities was that hiring these women as labourers (collies), in their farms, would invoke the wrath of the goddess. It was believed that they had to be redeemed from such duties in violation of which the terrible anger of the goddess (kopa) would ensure destruction and ill luck.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, another interesting belief reported, was that the logic for temporary or uncertainly nature of relationship with these women was that long term relations from which they had been redeemed would bring in fatal consequences even leading to death of the person (client). So also, proverbs like jogati devachi bhoga gavachi <sup>66</sup> (jogati belongs to the god but it is the village that derives sexual pleasure) emphasize, in however vulgarized notion, the erotic identity of the women. Interestingly, Frederique Marglin reports similar sexual practices among the temple women in Puri. It was generally regarded as a tradition for the temple women to maintain sexual relations with the Brahman priests and the king.<sup>67</sup> Though it was the king that had the traditional duty to have sexual relation with the women. Accordingly, resonate the practice of outcaste sacred prostitution; on attaining puberty, these dedicated women consummate their marriage either with the king or the temple priests. What is crucial is that only on puberty would she perform the rituals in the temple and become the concubine of the king.<sup>68</sup> Thus, any attempt to transcribe a chaste virgin identity to the sacred prostitute fails to appreciate the complexity of sexual behavior and values reinforcing the erotic identity of the women in caste societies.

Incest is a concomitant phenomenon of sacred prostitution generated by ritualistic sanction to the dedication of the female embryo, girl child, non-recognition of ties between children of the sacred prostitutes and caste Hindu men, and general access to outcaste femininity. It is this derangement of relations that fosters incestuous



inclinations within the tradition. A recurring theme in outcaste moments concern on issue of sexuality has been specifically been that of incest, since the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its significance lies in the insights it offers into sexual mores in caste societies. In caste societies kinship relations are idealized and strictly adhered to with violations strongly reprovred. Perhaps repression of sexuality is a fundamental trait in caste societies, for the restraint it imposes on sexual relations, Desire or sexual relations are channalised and institutionalized through endogamy, though exogamy does permit upper caste males to indulgence in that what is conversely denied to castes lower in hierarchy. However, such hierarchised sexual behaviour is sacralised and interwoven with issues of caste honour. Thus, recreating a space that could defuse the repression manifesting into practices that could be termed as sexual pathology, diverging form dominant modes of behaviour. Perhaps it is this convergent space in the caste complex that sustains the rigid caste norms as it is within this space that they are not simply violated but transcended, resulting into what could be defined as sexual anarchy. It is within this context that the issue of relations with outcaste women and incest need to be located. For instance Devaraya Ingle who initiated a vigorous movement against the custom dealt with this issue in his novel, the Suleya Magalu (the Prostitutes Daughter)<sup>69</sup> providing a glimpse into the subterranean domain. The plot is as follows:

Jogati Muttavva is a Sule/concubine of Annarao Patel, the village gowda or lord. She begets a daughter, Ratnavva, from this relationship. As Muttavva ages and loses her youthful charms, the Gowdas interest in her declines. Shankar, a teacher, arrives. He implores Muttavva to send her daughter to school incurring the displeasure of the village. Sankara encourages Muttavva not to succumb to the opinion of the village. Thus, Ratnavva continues to go to school in spite of the mounting pressure in the village. The furious villagers spread rumors about the alleged illicit relationship between Muttavva and Shankara. Muttavva is also subject to insult by the villagers on her visit to their houses on begging rounds. One day she meets Annarao Patil on the way. He asks her why she was sending her daughter to school. Whatever was a Sule's daughter to do with education? One or the other day she was to become a Sule (prostitute). Frightened Muttavva concedes to soon withdraw Ratnavva from school but continues for the time being as she was just a child. However, Ratnavva passes out from school following which Sankara takes her to Dharwad and admits her in a teachers training college. Qualifying the course Ratnava returns back to her village as a schoolteacher of the village school. Annarao Patel and the villagers are enraged and refuse to send their children to school. Patel is determined to create more trouble for Ratnavva. Muttavva pleads him to stop troubling her daughter. On this he derisively comments, "Who will marry your daughter? Today or tomorrow she has to become a Devadasi." In a patronizing manner he suggests, "I will also keep her as my concubine and register land on her name." Shocked Muttavva reveals in furiously, "Who do you think Ratnavva is? She is none but your daughter. How can you say you will sleep with your daughter? Are you a human being or an animal?" Not bothered by this revelation Annarao is



determined to overpower the mother and daughter through the village panchayat. In the meeting, Muttavva and Ratnavva are accused of violating dharma and the norms of the village. Ratnavva is held guilty of not pursuing her caste duty and for attempting to elude her hereditary profession of a sacred prostitute. The panchayat passes a decision to boycott the two accused. Here, Sankar comes to their rescue by providing the needed help. Contemptuous of Ratnavva identity as a Sule's daughter, her prospects of marriage are feeble. Finally, Shankar gets his son to tie the nuptial knot to Ratnavva". The psychological implications of such behaviour remains unexplored, thus leading to proliferation of works on untouchability reinforcing traditional ideas on purity and pollution.

Thus, it had always been a dilemma as to where the intercourses took place given the rigid rules governing interaction. And how was this invisibilised in caste consciousness? However what the women informed was striking. It was generally accepted that it was the outcaste hamlets that the caste Hindu man visited on performance of the puberty right or generally initiation. Usually it was decided as to who had the privilege to initiate a virgin jogati into a life of concubine. Interestingly the nocturnal visitor visited late hours at night and left the segregated hamlets in the early hours of the morning. While another piece of information maintained that the outcaste men would be supplied with toddy or cheap liquor on the occasion and all the arrangements to receive the caste Hindu man to a particular jogati hamlet were made.<sup>70</sup> The nocturnal visitor would enter clandestinely when all the evening chores were usually complete and then scud away before the outcaste colony got back to morning activity.<sup>71</sup> However in some parts preying at night was not a norm as they did flagrantly violate norms of untouchability during the day. However, in certain parts the caste Hindu men made sure they carries their purifying source, water, along with them to the outcaste hamlet, to cleanse their private parts after the defiling act.<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

What is relevant is to note the manner in which ritual distances are diminished and then realigned. The subversive and resistive potential that the ritual events symbolize, perhaps, defuses tensions, negotiate conflicts and thus are empowering, in howsoever-limited sense, in the temporal sphere. In this space the outcastes reenacts his identity and extraordinary capacity and the Brahmin, the Shudras cannot but acknowledge it from a distance. However, to the dominant class such activities reveal periodically the dangerous implications of such physically overpowering and powerful expressions if transposed in the temporal sphere. It is at the periphery that the conflicts prevail and in eventual appropriation that their subversive potential defused, though it is eventually by resorting to purificatory rites that the castes Hindus reaffirm their superiority. However ultimately it is the sexual anxiety that underlies caste hegemony, be it in the suppression of desire of caste Hindu femininity and outcaste masculinity or the unfettered aggressive sexuality of caste Hindu masculinity and the sexual oppression of outcaste femininity. What is



crucial to note is that the outcaste woman is not ideally an untouchable woman as epitomized by the outcaste male. It is this liminal identity of the outcaste woman that needs to be underscored in accounting for the many contradictions in caste practices the irony of which is poignantly expressed by the outcaste sacred prostitutes today, "We are untouchable during the day and touchable at night." However it is only by recovering their private space that the Outcastes can gain its moral base and eventually liberation from caste oppression.

It is this history of sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual repression in its varied manifestations that need to be explored in understanding the often-mentioned dilemma of touchability and untouchability. The fact that we have been solely oriented by monolithic narratives that hardly account for the nuances and intimacies of caste and outcaste structures have often resulted in patronizing and moralizing ideologies. The fact that several such practices have remained unexplored reflects the lack of sensitivity to customs affecting the culture at the periphery and also the manner in which social sciences in postcolonial period have retained apathy to such issues. It is in this context that the outcaste sacred prostitute is a site that narrates a history of power, conflict and hegemony.

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- 3 Dharma Rao, Tapi, *Devalayalamida Buthubommalemduku?* (Telugu), (Hyderabad: Visalandra, 1994), (First Published in 1936).
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- 5 For instance Max Muller, *Natural Religion*, (Delhi, 1979), (first Published in 1889), also see P.J. Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge, 1970); Nancy G Cassels, (ed.), *Orientalism, Evangelicalism and Military Cantonment in Early Nineteenth Century India: A Historiographical Overview*, (Queenstown, Canada, 1991).
- 6 These views circulated across travelogues and missionary accounts.
- 7 James Frazer *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, (London, 1907), Robert Briffault, *The Mothers: A study of Origins of Sentiments and Institutions*, 3 vols. (London, 1927).
- 8 The information collected at various levels by individual accounts from within



the colonial bureaucracy, Missionaries and official ethnography. That the custom was integral part of high caste Hindu culture could most effectively be constructed on such structural and cultural dimensions.

- 9 J.N. Farquhar *Modern Religious Movements in India*, ((Delhi: Munshiram and Manoharlal, 1967), (first published in 1914), p.407.
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- 11 James Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, (London, 1907).
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- 15 Edgar Thurston and Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* Madras, Government Press 1909 N M Penzer ed *The Ocean Of Story C H Tawney's translation of Somadeva's Katha Sarit Sagara* Motilal Banrsidass Delhi 1968 Indian reprint Vol .I Appendix IV
- 16 Association of western women with Brahma Samaj members and activities in juxtaposition to missionaries like Emma Rouschenbough-Clough, actively associated with outcastes of the Telugu speaking region, debunked the monolithic construction of oriental women.
- 17 For instance see the representation of the 'Devadasi custom' in theosophical movement and its influence both in south India as also in the west. Muthulaxmi Reddy, S, *Autobiography of Dr. (Mrs.) S.Muthulakshmi Reddy*, (Madras: Author, 1964) p 141-2
- 18 For instance, the establishment of the National Indian Association in England by Mary Carpenter to disseminate knowledge about the colony, as mentioned by Barbara N. Ramusack, "Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists: British Women Activities in India, 1865-1945", in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds.), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, op.cit. p. 122.
- 19 *The Englishman's Review*, *Women's Suffrage Journal* that reprinted 'native' excerpts from the *Madras Mail*, and *Women's Penny Paper*, *The New Statesman*.
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- 21 Katharine Mayo, *Mother India*, (London, 1927)



- 22 The 'accuracy,' and truthfulness of the account was conceded by the natives as the colonial authorities.
- 23 An extract from the columns of the New Statesman, July 16, 1972, reviewing Mother India on its first appearance in Britain. Quoted from the Katherine Mayo *Slaves of the God Op.cit* Appendix
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- 25 Henry Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South India*, (Calcutta, 1921).
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- 39 Gavin Flood, 1996, pp. 161-162.
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- 42 Ibid. p. 28. *Gudiseti* or *Gudicheti* implies women who rendered sexual services in the temple, which perhaps explicitly conveys the distinct identity of the archetypal sacred prostitute.
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- 44 Savi Savarkar is a dalit artist whose work is well recognized in Europe and other parts of the western world. Savarkar fired by the zeal to get to the underground, to see the experience of dedication of outcaste girls to deities disguised as a Brahmin and lived in the temple of Saundatti, Belgaum District in the 1991 for six months. He lived as a deaf and dumb Brahmin and recalls that he had most of time kept his eyes half closed so as not to incur suspicion as he moved into the interiors of the temple. He often bribed the temple officials for having access to the inner parts of the temple from the stipend he got from the Lalit Kala Academy then as a student. He escaped from there as there was threat to his life on being suspected as playing foul. His provocative and blasphemous pictures often engage with the theme of devadasi and the temple priest and with a sexually explicit imagery.
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- 71 This practice was considered as the standard practice in both the regions, according to the ex- jogatis/joginis themselves.
- 72 I am grateful to Savi Savarkar, a dalit artist, for sharing this information.



# DORA AND GADI: MANIFESTATION OF LAND-LORD DOMINATION IN TELENGANA

I. Thirumali

This paper examines the structure of dominance and power that evolved over time in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. Tracing the origin of the *deshmukhs* as local chiefs the paper discusses the extension of their power through a combination of landlordism, obstruction of free market in land and labour, the limited and controlled incorporation of intermediate classes into the power hierarchy, physical coercion and the enforcement ritual symbolic practices that reinforced the 'servility' of the lower castes and the 'authority' of the superior castes. In all this there was a constant process of adjustment and adapting to changing circumstances, which enabled the 'doras' to maintain their power over a long period.

The survival of '*doras*' in Telangana presents a typical case of the evolution and survival of landlords of the pre-independence period for over three hundred years, undergoing transformations and adapting to changing circumstances and needs. In the face of opposition from the people they attempted to consolidate their domination, at social and cultural level, in terms of the naturality of their superior caste position and domination in the past. By performing regular morning *pooja*, constructing and renovating temples and participating in '*jataras*' and religious ceremonies they legitimized their domination and coercive practices. The overt coercive practice of the *doras* to impose their domination on the people was an important determinant of the people's revolt of 1940s, and this confers relevance on a comprehensive study of the *doras*. Though they were products of colonial needs and the requirements of the Hyderabad state, they outlived both these regimes. They enforced the extraction of '*vetti*' and controlled village life. They were the prime targets of the people's revolt in Telangana in 1940s.

## ORIGIN OF DESHMUKHS

In Telangana, a part of the central Deccan region, the '*deshmukhs*' survived for long as local chiefs, whose sphere of power often spread to a '*paragana*' which consisted usually of 20 to 60 villages<sup>1</sup>. They were primarily revenue collectors; and when (magisterial and judicial) responsibilities were added to their function they became *deshmukhs*, chiefs of the *paraganas*. Gradually each of these assignments tended to become a '*watan*' i.e., hereditary lease. Despite changes in the political authority at the top, this institution survived, since no ruler from above wished to risk disturbing local administration, headed by village officials. This institution was deeply entrenched in the region with local support and structured in organized 'community' life. The *deshmukhs* presided over meetings of the *pargana* community known as '*got sahba*' which decided and confirmed claims over inheritance, purchase and transfer of *watans*. The *deshmukhs* by virtue of local sanction and consensus could not be easily displaced from above.



However with the onset of colonial rule, 'feudal' relationships in the pargana and village tightened, transforming or subordinating the deshmukhs to yield to mercantile interests. In the early years of colonial rule, the British, following policies oriented towards financing trade and war efforts, did not essentially alter the existing agrarian social structure. Instead the deshmukhs were integrated into the new system of control and exploitation, as revenue contractors<sup>2</sup>. Some of the deshmukhs thus became 'tahuddars'<sup>3</sup> and 'sarbastadars'<sup>4</sup> to serve the new interests. The leaseholders under these tenures were only responsible to the state for the payment of revenue of the leased area for specific periods; hence, they abandoned the role they formerly played in the local communities. They were, however, only 'contractors or managers for the time being' but not proprietors. The British had to fight at many places to bring some of the locally powerful rebel deshmukhs under their rule. Most of them were 'respectable' in their respective areas and had established themselves as powerful chiefs. The Aswaraopet deshmukh for example occupied "the ghurry [gadi] a neat and strong stone structure of 1,000 yards and maintains at his own expense a retinue of 100 sebundee peons besides a few horses"<sup>5</sup>. But by and large they had been brought under colonial rule either through battles or threats and were co-opted as revenue collectors to the new regime. But the "difficulty of introducing the new system was chiefly experienced in Telangana where the payment in kind had always been prevalent"<sup>6</sup>, which helped them play the role of merchants by taking revenue in kind and paying cash to the state; this role whitened their activity and enlarged their power: thus they played additionally the role of merchants and usurers under colonial rule restricting the local bania, 'komati' to shop keeping.

## **DESHMUKHS TO LANDLORDS**

Unscrupulous collection of land revenue under the new arrangement widened the scope for usury. The combination of mercantile and usurious interests impeded the production process leading to a severe agrarian crisis in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>. Peasants deserted land, as most 19<sup>th</sup> century sources indicate, leading to drastic decline in cultivated area. The main task of Salarjung I was therefore to bring such deserted lands under cultivation apart from introducing other policies to promote trade and agrarian production<sup>8</sup>. During the period of Salarjung's 'reforms' the deshmukhs got absorbed as landlords though deshmukh watans were practically abolished to bring the entire land under ryotwari tenure. First, the 'patta' right, was introduced, therefore, these deshmukhs became 'khatadars' or 'pattadars' by entering them into the revenue records as legal landowners. Though the loss of watans deprived them of their title to ownership, yet under the new reforms they were converted into big landlords with juridical and legal guarantee to their proprietary rights over the land. These reforms helped them to stabilize their position as permanent landlords unlike the earlier uncertain and speculative surbasta or tahud<sup>9</sup>. They were also enabled to lease in government land under various tenures like 'makta' (panmakta' and 'bilmakta'), 'ijara' and 'banjara' to bring not only deserted lands



under cultivation but also to bring forests under cultivation to increase agrarian production. Thus locally powerful landlord families acquired new titles such as 'maktadars', 'ijaradars' and 'banjraders' though all of them were not necessarily from the former deshmukh families. Tenure holders had to bring new lands under cultivation and guarantee cultivation and for this purpose again they got some more land on patta right<sup>10</sup>.

The pattern of land settlement was in favour of big holdings, which naturally helped the emergence of big landholders. It was not unusual for influential village bosses to make their way into the survey records as owners. (pattadars) by bribing survey officials. Even the official survey favoured them because, while surveying the land, all surrounding waste/uncultivated barren lands in between the tores and the ridges with thorny scrubs and bushes were attached to the actually cultivated terraced fields. Hence even today huge holdings of about 20-30 acres may be observed under a single survey number. Under such survey the cultivator had to pay land revenue for the surrounding uncultivated land full of thorny scrubs and granite rocks which required intensive human labour for clearing<sup>11</sup>. Cultivators of such barren land often surrendered them to the government. The state's concern was to maximize revenue by forcing cultivators to expand the arable which ultimately favoured the emergence of big landlords. Those cultivators who were confident of carrying on large-scale cultivation by clearing scrubs and by constructing water reservoirs and tanks for irrigation purposes supported by capital and the capacity to employ adequate labourers took over land under patta right<sup>12</sup>. It was not possible for peasants relying on family labour to bring such lands under cultivation on a large scale. The settlement officials did not take this fact into account; instead they preferred landlord agriculture.

Sandy soil containing genesis and granite requires constant watering and fertilization. But the vagaries of the monsoon (rainfall varying between 25-40 inches) made the crop uncertain. The cultivators usually did not risk working on such lands all year round without the guarantee of adequate returns<sup>13</sup>.

Further, the substantial reduction of land revenue rates that was initially planned did not materialize since instead provision was made for remissions of land revenue during periods of crop failure<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, resident Fitzpatrick commented in a settlement report that it was only possible for big landholders to own land because landholders in order to meet the revenue demand had to irrigate the land for cultivating crops like sugarcane, cotton, and rice<sup>15</sup>. Thus historical and ecological reasons did not favour the growth of small peasant holdings in Telangana.

## **DESHMUKHS AND MODERN AGRARIAN PRODUCTION**

Colonialism was another important exogenous factor that contributed to the growth of the landlord economy in Telangana. The fixing of the responsibility of regular payment of land revenue on the landholder by the Salarjung reforms was



conditioned by the demands of the colonial rulers. The basic thrust of his policy was to increase the volume of Hyderabad's external trade. The British administrators led by director general of revenue, A. J. Dunlop, in the 1890s planned to promote commodity production within the state. Certain important items like "Castor seed (were) originally exempted from duty" not without colonial interest to promote its production in the state<sup>16</sup>. The 'autonomy' enjoyed by Salarjung was motivated by colonial interests to develop agrarian production in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The two conditions outlined above – the pattern of land settlement and the state induced production for the external market – were important factors, which guided the pattern of production in the state. The landlord economy which emerged out of Salarjung's reforms worked most suitably and efficiently using vast lands and cheap labour, responding positively to the changing needs and circumstances. It was during the heyday of the landlord-dominated economy that Hyderabad's agrarian produce – castor seed, sesame cotton, tobacco, rice, wheat jowar, bajra and pulses – entered the external market<sup>17</sup>. The state's revenue on account of external trade increased by about 40 per cent between 1875-1876 and 1889-1890<sup>18</sup>.

The landlords had the advantage of possessing enough circulating capital to meet on farm requirements. The state granted them a regular annual 'rusum' (remuneration or a sort of pension) after abolition of revenue farming<sup>19</sup>. Later by taking up excise contracts and money lending they acquired additional capital. This proved to be very lucrative in a situation of hard currency scarcity in the villages after the state made revenue payment in cash compulsory<sup>20</sup>.

What is most important is the emergence of a servile-labour based social formation under the landlords during this period. Labour was abundantly available in Telangana. The landlords forcibly transformed the large mass of the rural population into 'servile' labour. The landlords ensured regular and constant supply of labour by bringing untouchables and 'sudra' low castes under extensive debt bondage.

The service castes of the village holding 'inam' land<sup>21</sup> were forced to work free on landlords' lands though 'inam' grants were made to facilitate professional services in villages. Landlords by attaching labour to their domestic and agricultural work converted it to forced vetti labour. They also converted the untouchable and low caste traditional musicians, bards and genealogists to servile 'bhagela' labour. In the process the growth of a free labour market was restricted<sup>22</sup>. Seizing the economic opportunities of the colonial context landlords diverted their vast lands to the cultivation of commercial crops like castor and ground nut with the help of servile labour, (However, it was also easy to cultivate castor and groundnut as they do not require constant labour.) The imposition of colonial interests on backward agrarian social structure brought about the condition of unfree labour. Therefore, the existence of servile labour should not be seen as a trait of the medieval economy but as a product of the colonial rule.



## HIERARCHY OF POWER – GROUPS

The specter of landlords as a powerful dominant group in the village, controlling the entire rural society in Telangana was primarily determined by colonial conditions; it was also the result of a systematic effort made with the co-operation of other dominant rural groups. The other dominant group of the village below the landlords in the hierarchy was that of village officials (*patels* and *patwaris*). The *patel* could belong to any caste but the *patwari* was invariably a neogi Brahmin. They were police and revenue functionaries respectively. They lived in comfortable *bungalows* in the style of the landlords served by numerous farm servants called '*jeetagallu*'. They were regarded as being essentially 'mischievous' and 'dishonest' and known for promoting conspiracies in villages<sup>23</sup>. It was generally feared that enmity with a *patwari* led only to the grave<sup>24</sup>.

The landlords subdued the people with their authority whereas the *patwaris* exercised control over them through machinations. The landlords and the village officers sometimes vied with each other to prove superiority but despite these differences they often buried the hatchet and coalesced in order to prolong the system of oppression and exploitation. They shared a conviction that people's consciousness meant their doom and the unity of both the *doras* and village officials was recognized by both as a way of retaining their strength.

The third group in the hierarchy was the village landholders with *patta* right and considerable size of land holdings. They emerged as a distinct social group from amongst the *kapus*<sup>25</sup>, who distanced themselves from the lower-caste *sudras*. However, in terms of the pattern and aims of life and attitudes, they were different from the landlords. These landholders lived mostly in '*bhavanti*' type<sup>26</sup> *pacca* houses had enough cattle, land and stocks of grain and agricultural instruments. In appearance and dress they looked like peasants nevertheless, they lived with '*izzat*' (prestige) enjoying the status of '*asamims*', '*pedda kapus*', '*peddarytus*' or '*motubarirytus*'. Though they could read and write they were considered uneducated in the sense that they were unaware of the intricacies of government rules. They were not conversant in Urdu and hence were unable to meet officers and get their work done. Their sons and in some cases even their daughters were provided modern education. The younger generation of this group brought the nationalist and communist (Andhra Maha Sabha) ideologies and politics into the rural areas. But by and large the older generation of superior *kapus* liked to be in the company of the *doras* and village officers to get their work done in the government offices and to carry on their work peacefully. In other words, these dominant landholding *motubaris* obliged and endorsed the *doras*' efforts in enforcing caste-based labour exploitation on due to their casteist perceptions and exploitative ethical values.

These 'recalcitrant' *ryots* appear to have enjoyed considerable lee-way and as such "persistently failed to carry out the (government) orders... passed from



time to time<sup>28</sup>. The peddakapulu were assertive of their rights at least in certain places if not in all the villages. They had their own grievances against the landlords, nevertheless they joined hands with them because of casteist perceptions and caste-based oppression of the 'chillarakulalu' (cheap or trivial castes, i.e., lower castes). The common argument that all classes/castes of people were equally oppressed by the landlords is not quite true. The lowest were more oppressed and lived with low caste status. What the landlords did to oppress low caste people was in keeping with the (at least imaginary) interest of upper caste landowners who employed lower caste people as agricultural workers. (However, even the landowners lower in the hierarchy faced inconvenience at peak periods, e.g. at the time of the transplanting and picking of groundnuts, as the labourers had to work on the fields of the doras first. They could not exercise power freely over the village and over the labouring castes).

All these landowners, like the landlords, resented the conversion of the lower castes to Islam and not for religious reasons alone. All of them unitedly boycotted converts and refused to give work and 'baluta' (customary remuneration). The peddarytus joined the landlords in bringing the converts back into vetti service<sup>29</sup>.

The landlords could assume their standing and authority in the villages because of the co-operation of peddarytus. And it was with the support of the other dominant groups the landlords could organize the caste-based agrarian economy and the village social structure to the advantage of landowners. The landlords proved successful in bringing the entire village under a new social and cultural domination either through consent or compulsion and established 'dora rajyam', the rule of the landlords. The landlords, thus, occupied a pivotal position in village life and established new cultural ethos and assumed the position of protector and overseer of such a system.

## LANDLORDS TO DORAS

The *deshmukhs* in the process practically usurped the authority of state and kept "the whole countryside... in their "possession" to establish their rajyam<sup>30</sup>. Their power and prestige as landlords not only depended upon their past glory as revenue farmers but also on various factors like their caste, land, money, ruthlessness and above all their proximity to local government officials. That is to say, any upper caste person with all the above features could be called a *dora*. As such most of them belonged to upper castes, primarily, Reddies. But some Brahmin, Velama and Muslim *deshmukhs* (doras) were also found in some villages. All of them believed that their real strength lay in keeping the people under foot. The people had to depend upon them for credit, work, land and the enforcement of 'nyayamu' (justice). The real foundations of their power were the people's poverty, dependence and ruthless repression of any sign of dissent. Any sign of independence and well-



being was not tolerated by them. There were even instances of punishment of people who built proper houses and wore shirts (in Telangana villages shirts are not worn even to this day). However, despite such medieval socio-cultural traits, there were instances of the *deshmukhs* living in modern bungalows and maintain cars besides giving the best available education to their children. In addition to the use of *vetti* and *bhagela* labour for agricultural work pump-sets and other available modern technology were employed produce for the market.

The most 'notorious' dora families of Nalgonda and Warangal districts were Rapaka or Visnur, Janna Reddy, Nukala, Ramasahayam, Pingali and Lingala and their domain of influence and authority spread over a paragona or 'ilaqa'. But gradually the number of dora families increased from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through acquisition of lands and through ruthless exploitation<sup>32</sup>. The later dora families were Kundur, Nayani, Kondur, Katukuru, Pushkuri, Kathar, Kallur, Tadikamalla, Akkiraju, Boinapalli, Gaddam Gandra and Bandi. Therefore, hardly a village or hamlet was to be found in Telangana without a dora on the eve of the Telangana people's struggle. In almost every village (sometimes in a group of hamlets) could be found a palatial gadi – a huge fort like house with wide compound enclosed by a wall with tall gates in which the village dora lived with family members. The entourage included 'dasis' (slave girls) and their children. The dora was served by a large number of *vetti* workers and *bhagelas* as at his gadi and farms.

In addition, the doras assumed and exercised magisterial powers over their respective ilaqa. Though the patwaris or police patels were actually in charge of law and order in the villages the doras supervised it. The patwari did not function independently; he preferred to route information to higher authorities through the doras. It became a custom, and they came to supervise 'rojanamchas' (diaries) like, births and deaths, whether cattle were put in bande (confinement), whether travelers / strangers had come to the village, whether goldsmith had melted gold, whether any theft or dacoity had taken place, whether anti-social elements were present in the village, whether any sale / purchase had taken place in the village and so on. Since the landlords had a say in all these activities they were called sarkar or doras and their subordinate servants like village officers and village servants 'sheksindi' were called 'sarkarmanushulu' (government servants).

The landlords by establishing their authority over government property, village resources and the people's activity acquired sufficient strength to become sarkar or doras. They established their supremacy over wasteland, government lands, trees, tanks, streams, and tank-beds in the village. In telangana there were vast areas of wastelands called 'porambokes' surrounding the village. No villager could live in the village without entering these lands. Villagers had to pass through these lands as they were around the village. Peasants feeding their cattle, shepherds feeding their sheep or goats, labourers collecting firewood and so on, had to use these lands. There were instances of imposition of fines on such use if the landlord did not



approve<sup>34</sup>. Every village had a 'banjara doddi' (cattle detention place) in every village, guarded by 'vetti madiga' to confine cattle, which entered these lands. No cultivator dared to use streams to irrigate their lands without the dora's permission<sup>35</sup>. The sanction of the dora was required even to make new wetlands with water from streams or tanks. There were instances of water being pumped out in the tanks in order to sow groundnut in tank-beds oblivious of the needs of the cultivators<sup>36</sup>. There were also instances of labourers being fined for using firewood or collecting mangoes and tamarind from trees in poramboke land<sup>37</sup>.

Their right of enforcing law and delivering judgments increased their power further. In the settlement of disputes the doras authority was unchallenged. The Dora's power of arbitration extended to land right disputes, caste group disputes or even domestic disputes between wife and husband, parents and major offspring or disputes over property distribution<sup>38</sup>. This was another area of conflict between the people and the Dora.

In the villages without Dora rajyam the people had the choice of selecting their own 'peddamanishi' (elderly or respected person of the village) for solving their disputes. However, people's resentment was steadily growing not simply because the parties had no choice in selecting their own peddamanishi but more so because the dora's decisions were injudicious being motivated by the objective of perpetuating domination. In the process, the collective 'dispensation of justice' by the peddamanushulu was replaced by a single person whose decision nobody in the village could challenge. Thus, the dora's dispensation of justice was unilateral and authoritarian. His language, tone and behaviour were infused with arrogance, authority and abuse in order to impose his decisions on the people. The landlords were often foulmouthed, using sentences that began and ended with abuse.

All judgments invariably reflected caste prejudices, which strengthened the impression that the dora was the protector of the caste system by enforcing the caste's professional duties<sup>40</sup>. To the large number of intermediary castes subjugation / subordination on the one side and domination / supraordination in the hierarchy on the other side, had given legitimacy to caste – based values, perceptions and punishments. Beating, tying the hands behind, and hanging from the branch of a tree became customary ways of extracting truth and punishing low caste persons. Therefore, the very thought of the gadi evoked terror in the hearts of the rural masses<sup>41</sup>. Usually, following the established custom, an untouchable was not supposed to sit in the presence of the dora but sudras could kneel down. Upper caste ryots with paruvu or izzat could sit on a bench-like cement / mudarugu<sup>42</sup>. Low caste persons were always addressed with belittling suffixes to their name (e.g. Muttaiah would be called Muttigadu). Further caste names were used instead of surnames (eg. Chakali Muttigadu or Madiga Muttigadu) for lower caste people<sup>43</sup>. It was this caste-based division of people into upper caste ryots with respectable status and lower castes called, 'chillarollu', 'lekolu', 'vettollu', 'kulollu' with low class posi-



tion, which helped the dora establish a new power structure, enabled him to maintain his domination over a long period.

The institution of the dora was maintained and sought to be justified by reference to the contradictions / antagonism between the peasant castes and labourers (untouchable and sudra lower castes). It had been emphatically maintained that caste distinctions were maintained in order to protect the upper castes from the 'uncontrollable' lower castes. It was claimed that had the Dora lost his grip the untouchables would have destroyed the entire village. It was, however, undoubtedly due to his unchallenged authority that the untouchables and lower caste sudras were kept under domination. Customary caste-based practices have never promoted free mobility and intermingling. For example, a labourer was not to stand erect in front of the dora. He had to stand bending himself often holding his hands to his chest or rolling his first in his palm. The labouring people were not permitted to wear shirts, chappals, 'talapaga' (headwear), 'tilak', or ornaments and invariably they tied their 'pancha' or 'dhoti' above the knees. They were not allowed to have the modern haircut. They had to shave their heads clean, leaving only a tuft and of course they never dared to sport prominent moustaches<sup>44</sup>. And every sentence the labourers spoke started with 'dora I am your slave, I touch your feet' (dora nee banchanu – nee kalmokta'). All these servile gestures became part of their cultural practices. The labourers obviously could not afford to break the entire culture based on domination though this should not be taken to mean acceptance or "internalization of subordination"<sup>45</sup>. Similarly, the peasants on the basis of their caste and class status had to follow different practices.

## DOMINATION IN THE TIME OF RESISTANCE

The doras became very particular about their domination in view of growing occasional outbursts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They hardened their position towards growing opposition and employed physical coercion to repress these outbursts. Any violation of customary domination was severely punished. It was enforced as a custom that any agricultural activity like 'yeruvaka' beginning of cultivation, sowing of seeds, transplanting, etc – had to begin with him in the forefront. Collective festivals were to be celebrated in consultation with him, seeking his permission and sometimes to be inaugurated by him or his representative. In jataras (processions) his 'prabha bandi' (decorated cart) was to be the first. Any violation of these practices was met with severe retribution as happened in Palakurthi when Andhra Maha Sabha workers wanted to take their prabha bandi first<sup>46</sup>. They made the practices of subordination more particular and severe. When the dora set out from his gadi to go out, people had to bow their heads and move to the side to give way. Women had to run into their hoes. When he went out on tours in his cart the vetti servants had to run in front and at the back of his cart.

The doras restricted the development of the land market because land control ensured real domination. The majority of the cultivators of makta, banjara lands



did not get the right to transfer the lands they were cultivating. Such lands were under the control of the doras. The landlords occupied or exchanged the lands that were both fertile and suitably located near their fields. They attempted to occupy the lands of the peasants perhaps to show that they were powerful. Otherwise, they were not in need of any additional land. People involved in seizing land were mostly small landlords, who did so with the connivance of the doras.

### APPENDIX

Sl. No.	Village	Name of Landlord	Details about Seizure of Land
1.	Palliwada Bhongir taluq	Village officers	The ownership right of land was 'illegally transferred' from a poor widow belonging to potters caste by the village officials in connivance with the tahsildar.
2.	Devaruppala Jangaon taluq	'A certain man'	With the support of Visnur Ramachandra Reddy 'a certain man' occupied lands belonging to a poor widow. He was considered to be 'a notorious delinquent'.
3.	Jadikal	Shavi Reddy Gumastha Patwari	Fraudulently transferred the land of a poor ryot in his name.
4.	Jangaon	Moulvi Munir Ahmed (brother of Zaheer Ahmed)	Took possession of nearly five acres of land belonging to a poor widow in Jangaon town. On a portion of it he constructed a bungalow and planted a garden.
5.	Aroor Bhongir talug	Thummal Narasaiah 'wealthy ryot'	Exercised influence over the ryots and officers of the court. He obtained possession of a 'mote' (Water-lifting device for irrigation purpose) and two acres of land of a poor 'dhangar' in fictitious sale deed and later murdered the dhangar. He managed to acquire another 'mote' for his son-in-law in the same manner.
6.	Narmata Jangaon taluq	Malipatel Ranga Reddy Patwari Kishan Rao	Due to the death of four people in his family, a peasant left home for some time in 1925. In his absence the malipatel and patwari illegally transferred the land (22 acres 13 'guntas' bearing survey nos. 307/2, 492/2, 609, 618) to their names presenting Yerraboina Jakkayya



- |    |                                  |                                       |
|----|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 7. | Avadhur Jangaon                  | 'Deshmukh'                            |
| 8. | Mulakalapalli<br>(Bhongir taluq) | Patwari Yenamma<br>W/o. Hanmantha Rao |
| 9. | Kamareddy<br>gudem               | Rajeswar Rao                          |

as owner before the district authorities.

The patta of a superior quality land was fraudulently acquired from the ryots. It was done cleverly with the help of tahsil officials. Even on the order of the revenue member the file was not traced hence the revenue member noted that the land could not be returned. The subedar also said 'the loss of the DO file is in itself a sufficient proof of the Pattadar's fraud'. But they could do nothing. Land was given to shepherds on 'kowl' for a fixed amount on condition that they should repair dilapidated wells at their own expense. After all the wells were repaired and the land was irrigated, she increased the rent with the intention of taking back the land. However, the shepherds reluctantly accepted the increased rent. Later, she sought the help of Mucha Narasimhulu to dispossess the shepherds. Narasimhulu brought the Arab gang led by Abul Fatah from Hyderabad and the tenants were evicted. According to the report Abul Fatah terrorized the poor ryots in the area. 'The wealthy ryots of the village took his help to dispossess the poor ryots.

Deshmukh Rajeswara Rao, forcibly occupied forest lands of the cultivators. He was murdered by the peasants in 1935.

**Source:** A Glimpse into Bhongir and Jangoan, 1932-33: A Government Enquiry Report by S. Ahmed Mohiuddin, Second Taluqdar, Bhongir Division, Hyderabad, 1935.

In view of the growing independence of cultivators, the doras encouraged and groomed a class of landowners to be their direct followers and henchmen to maintain effective control. Certain families like Bandi Gandra, Yadavalli, Pasnoor, Nellutla and Akavaram appear to have acquired land through this means (under the protective cover of the doras). This group of landlords combined money lending,



and grainlending with the cultivation and hardboursing the ambition of acquiring status equal to that of the doras in order to enter into matrimonial alliances with them started acquiring lands. Some of them like Veeramaneni Sheshagiri Rao<sup>47</sup>, Pingali Kodanda Rami Reddy<sup>48</sup>, Kadivendi 'dorasani' Janakamma<sup>49</sup> were promoted by the doras (see appendix for a number of others who acquired land through these methods).

Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, in this report 'Janagaon, Prajala Veerochita Poratalu' (the heroic struggles of Janagaon people) published in 1946, gives a good description of the methods the doras, employed to hold down the peasantry. The landlords in Janagaon were impatient, intolerant of the growing consciousness, independence and spirit of defiance on the part of the cultivators. The people were growing 'recalcitrant', "persistent" (government version), "proud", "careless" and "unmindful of the doras" (dora version)<sup>50</sup>. Visnur Ramachandra Reddy could not reconcile himself to the idea of people living independently without coming to his gadi in his ilaqa. For instance, he created a promissory note stating that Billa Kanakaiah of Kamareddigudem had borrowed money from Pingali Pratap Reddy of Pargi taluq (Mahbubnagar district) when Kanakaiah had been there in connection with the purchase of sheep. And the Visnur dora 'purchased' the note from his relative Pratap Reddy and filed a petition in the court and got notices served on Kanakaiah for the recovery of the 'loan'. In another case Billa Venkata Reddy was implicated in a case of molesting a woman and was arrested. In similar fashion Kathar Narasimha Rao harassed Girigani Ramalingam, Vangapandu Yellaiah, and Vangapandu Chandraiah<sup>51</sup>. These acts of the doras were intended to perpetuate their domination in view of the growing independence among people. Their attempts at dividing the people, intimidating them and implicating them in cases did not prove to be sufficient to maintain their 'petthanamu', i.e., domination. They also groomed a section of their farm servants as goondas. Even when selecting servants they preferred people with anti-social antecedents; besides, anti-social elements of the village were tamed and used to harass the people. Visnur Ramachandra Reddy maintained a force of 60 goondas under the notorious Miskeen Ali and Vanamala Venkadu<sup>52</sup>. These acts were nothing but desperate attempts to maintain their authority over the villagers at any cost in view of the resistance growing all-round.

The landlords, transferred into doras a long period of time, played a central role in the transition to colonialism in Hyderabad. They legitimized their superior position by superimposing and maintaining caste-based inequality. Caste perceptions played a significant role in establishing the new power structure. While reconstituting a new power base they meticulously maintained the subordinate postures of the people below them on the basis of caste in social hierarchy. They controlled the economy, society and the life of the people and developed a new culture of domination. They established new hierarchy of power and maintained it well into the mid-20th century.



## Referenes

1. Des (country) + mukh (chief) = desh mukh. See Kotani Hiroyuki, 'The Vatan System in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Century Deccan – Towards a New Concept of Indian Feudalism' *Acta Asiatica*, no.49, March 1985, p.38 Also See Veerabhadrao, 'History of Deshmukhs' *Golconda Patrika*, November 29, 1948.
2. Thomas R. Metcalf's comment on the Oudh talukdars applies to the desh mukhs, "The most striking feature in the fate of this landlord community under the British, was... rather the persistence in positions of power of the old landed classes by a process of adaptation to the altered political and economic conditions ". From *Raja to Landlord: The Oudh Talukdars, 1850-1870* in Robert Eric Frykenberg (ed), **Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History**, Manohar, 1979, p.123.
3. Leaseholders under tahud were "generally wealthy and influential residents of the city whose social position commanded respect" responsible to pay land revenue along with other abwabs like tax on excise, professions, etc. to the State (Revenue Administration Report, Nizam's Government, 1914-15, p.54). Mostly commercialized desh mukhs and merchants were leaseholders under tahud.
4. Sarbastadars were normally zamindars' who held the lease of entire district under sarbasta, *ibid*, p.54 Sarbasta means revenue fixation with the knowledge of local conditions, therefore desh mukhs were preferred (Provincial Gazetteer, Hyderabad, 1909, pp.58-59).
5. **Hyderabad Affairs**, Bombay, 1883, Vol.1, p.154.
6. Sayed Hussain Bilgrami and C Wilmott, *Histrocial and Descriptive Sketch of HEH the Nizam's Dominions*, Bombay, 1884, p.133.
7. Defenders of Salarjung's policies did not see the crisis in the state in the broader colonial context. Rather they accused Chandulal a puppet prime minister of the state for his policy of surrendering the State to the British interest. See Sayed Hossain Bilgrami and C willmott, *op cit*. Moulvi Chirag Ali, *Hyderabad under Salarjung*. Vols 1 to IV, Bombay, 1885. For more on colonial plunder, see Zubaida Yazdani, *Hyderabad during the Residency of Henry Russell, 1811-1820*, Oxford, 1976.
8. See in this context Sayed Hossain Bilgrami and C Willmott, *op cit*. Moulvi Chirag Ali, *op cit* and V K Bawa, *The Nizam between Mughals and British; Hyderabad under Salarjung I*, New Delhi, 1986.
9. See V K Bawa, *op. cit* for the nature of the Salarjung reforms: To them it was a sort of retirement with vast lands and family pension called 'rusum'. In addition land was liberally granted to them on patta right.
10. *Dastur-ul-Amal* (Revenue Code) of 1875, FN 6/10 of 1338F (1929) Mal Warangal branch, revenue department (RD) Nizam's government.
11. For the ecological aspect of Telangana, see OHK Spate, *ATA Learmonth*, BH



- Farmer and AM Learmonth, *India, Pakistan and Ceylon; The Regions*, London 1972; A B Mukharji, *Succession of Cultural Landscapers in Telangana Reddi Villages*, *The Indian Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXXIX, 1 and 2, April-June 1964.
12. *Introduction of Settlement Rates in Telangana* Instt No.5, List No.2 Serial No.46, political department, 1890, Nizam's government APSA
  13. OHK Spate et al, op cit p. 716
  14. *Introduction of Settlement Rates in Telangana*, op cit.
  15. Ibid
  16. A J Dunlop, *Memorandum on Proposals to Alter the Custom Tariff of the Nizam's Government*, Hyderabad, 1891; Maulvi Chirag Ali, op. cit, Sayed Hossain Bilgrami, op cit.
  17. Warangal district exported foodgrains and Nalgonda district exported oil seeds, *Provincial Gazetteer*, Hyderabad, 1909, pp 155 and 168.
  18. A J Dunlop, op cit, Appendix III
  19. *Revenue Administration Report, 1914-15*, Nizam's government, p.58.
  20. P. Sundaraiah, *Telangana People's Struggle and its lessons Calcutta 1971*: Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, *Jangaon Prajara Virochita Poratalu*, Vijayawada 1946; Barry Pavier, *The Telangana Movement, 1944-51*, New Delhi, 1981, p.4.
  21. It was the usual practice to grant inam land (free grant) to artisans and service castes to meet the requirements of villages populated to bring land under cultivation. This seemed to be the practice even otherwise in Deccan. See Kotani Hiroyuki op cit; we come across many such references in revenue department files.
  22. Details are discussed in Chapter III of my (unpublished Ph.D thesis, 'Lords and Peasants in Telangana, 1920-48: An Enquiry into the People's Uprising in Nalgonda and Warangal district's, submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University.
  23. A G Hankin, IGP considered them 'sharks of the place' confidential letter dated April 24, 1906. File No. 119/16, Mai Warangal branch, revenue department 1315F.
  24. For more about patwaris in the perception of the people, see P Narasimha Reddy *Telugu Samethalu-Jana Jeevanam*, nd. Pp. 197-98; also see Eric Robert Frykenberg, *Traditional process to power in South India; An Historical Analysis of Local Influences in Frykenberg (ed) Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, Manohar, 1979.
  25. Reddies, velamas, kammass were part of the kapus initially upto 1901 but due to the internal differentiation these rich acquired superior status by the 1931 census. See 1901 Census (table VII; 1921 Census table VIII and 1931 Census Report, pp. 246-47).



26. Bhavanti house indicates rich status. AB Mukherjee, Succession of Cultural Land Scales in Telangana Reddy Villages'. The Indian Geographical Journal, XXXIV, 1 and 2, April-June 1964.
27. Discussed elsewhere
28. File No. 4/10 Mal Warangal branch of revenue department 1333F (1924). In Viswanathapur village, Warangal taluq the Ijaradar Nellutla Narasimha Rao did not recognize the patta rights of ryots Yelgum Narasaiah and Akareddy Muttayya, therefore they neither paid rent to the Ijaradar nor revenue to the state for about 20 years. Though the government was ready to grant them patta right and asked them to clear arrears, they did not show any interest because they had been cultivating land without paying anything. Many such organized united assertions of their rights are reported in the files.
29. DGP letter No. G/47/1/46F, dated September 24, 1937, File No. 150/1346F home department 1346F, FR1, August 1936 (Crown representative Report), Hyderabad, NAI; Golconda Patrika, September 13, 1937.
30. A G Hankin's (IGP) confidential letter dated April 24, 1906. File No. 119/16 Mal. Warangal branch RD 1315F; also see for the role deshmukhs played in the village, File No.140/16 Mal Warangal Branch RD 1323F; Dasarathi Rangacharya Chillara-devullu (Telugu novel), Hyderabad, 1987; Vattikota Alwar Swamy, Prajala manishi (Telugu Novel), Vijayawada, 1970; Zaheer Ahmed, Dusk and Dawn in Village India; Tenty Fateful years; London, 1965.
31. See Devulapalli Venkateshwara Rao, Jagaon Prajal Virochita Poratalu, Vijayawada, 1946.
32. Hyderabad Affairs, I, Bombay, 1883; see complaints of Ellempet villagers against Janna Reddy family, File No.140/16 Mal Warangal branch RD, 1323 F.
33. Dasarathi Rangacharya, op. cit. P.45.
34. See Prajala manishi, Chillaradevullu, Modugupulu (Telugu novels) and short stories Telangana Porata kathalu, Vijayawada, 1985.
35. Ibid.
36. Haranath Polasa drew my attention to this fact.
37. A.G. Hankin's (IGP) Letter No.829, op.cit., Dasarathi Rangacharya, Chillaradevullu, Vattikota Alwar Swamy, Prajala Manishi, (Telugu novel)
38. For instance malligadu approaches the dora to solve the dispute with his brother on sharing of land in Dasarathi Rangachary, Chillaraduvullu, P.24.
39. In the later medieval period, the village community consisted of 'bara baluta', 12 hereditary watandars, artisans and peasants along with the patel and patwari used to decide matters in the village collectively. Kotani Hiroyuki, op.cit, P.P. 37, 38. For village life, see S.C. Dube, Indian Village, London, 1956. For the establishment of the domination of dora in the vallage, see, Zaheer Ahmed, op



cit., "The punchayate system is generally not in vogue, but disputes are settled locally" obviously by dora, S.K. Jyengar, *Economic Investigations in the Hyderabad State*, Vol. 1, Hyderabad, 1931, P. 39. This kind of change is still in the memory of the village people.

40. See K. Srinivasulu, 'Telangana peasant movement and change in the Agrarian Structure: A Case Study of Nalgonda'; Ph.D. thesis, CPS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, new Delhi, 1988, P. 183 ff.
41. See Chillaradevullu, *pc. Cit.*
42. This is the usual practice in the villages even today.
43. See names of the people entered in revenue records, police records and judicial records, eg. Erra Muttigadu, Wadla (blacksmith) Mallaiah who were given death sentences by military courts.
44. K. Srinivasulu, *op cit.*, see chapter, 'Structure of Domination and Subordination'.
45. For this sort of propositions see *ibid.* See also novels Chillaradevullu, Modugupulu, Prajala Manishi, *op. cit.*
46. This conflict led to launch a conspiracy case, Arutla Ramachandra Reddy, *Telangana Porata Smrithulu*, Vijayawada, 1981, P. 51. ff.
47. P. Sundraiah, *op. cit.* P. 31.
48. Barry Pavier, *op. cit.*, New Delhi, 1981, P.6.
49. Nalla Narasimhulu, *Telangana Sayudha Poratam: Na anubhavalu*, Hyderabad, 1988, PP. 40-42. Janakamma used to distribute her surplus grain to each door even in the absence of occupants and collected later with interest.
50. "The people did not care for the doras when their stomach was full" – popular dora saying in the Telangana village even today.
51. Devulapalli Venkateshwara Rao, Jangaon, Prajala Virochita Poratalu, Vijayawada, 1946, *passim*; Ravi Narayana Reddy, note dated February 29, 1945., File No.15/AND/54F supply HD. It was usual for the doras to force people sign promissory notes. Taking people to court to harass appears to have been common during this period.
52. When the Andhra Maha Sabha leaders complained to the government about his goondas, CID officers in their enquiry report accepted that "he has at Visnur 25 servants" File No.15/AD/54FI., HD 1354F. Among his well known goondas were Abdul Nabi, Muskeen Agayya, Dharmayya, Sukayya, Badesab, Vanamala Sattaiah, Ram Reddy, Rangaiah, Abbas Ali, Latiff, Muneep Lacchadu, Jangam Yelladu and Vanakondadu.



# **SOCIAL HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL ORISSA - A STUDY**

**Shishir Kumar Panda**

A distinctive feature of the social structure of medieval Orissa was the existence of a number of castes and communities. Large scale of land grants in this period with the transfer of various rights to both secular and religious donees and the process of subinfeudation created new production relation. This process had its consequence on the pattern of social stratification. Also the expansion of the political frontiers and the geographical location of the region which in turn gave rise to the changes in the pattern of caste system. The rigidity in the brahmanical system faded out and the concept of four varnas in the society became fluid. Brahmanas were not strictly confined to their caste professions. There was the operation of ksatriyaization process in the tribal areas. The relative importance of the vaisyas relegated to the background, gave rise to the emergence of a dominant class of karanikas. Also, there was an upward mobility in the lower stratum of the society i.e., sudra community as their accumulated surplus labour have made the owners of cultivable lands and this further led to the expansion of rice producing areas. There was also changes in their religious affiliation and practices which led to the social mobility in the society.

## **Brahmanas**

The brahmanas, who were traditionally regarded as the highest among the four varnas, were enjoying special prerogatives in medieval Orissa. They were the powerful members of the state and land owning aristocracy, wielding substantial political and economic power. At the same time they enjoyed the royal patronage also. Royal patronage to brahmanas in Orissa goes as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the rule of the Mathara dynasty<sup>1</sup>. From that period onwards, patronage to brahmanas by granting land and villages continued in Orissa. They were patronized by the early Gangas of kalinga, the sailedbhavas of kangoda, the bhaumakaras of Tosali and the somavamsis of south kosala and utkalas. However, the later eastern Ganga and suryavamsi Gajapati period marks the zenith of land grants to brahmanas.

### **1) Establishment of Brahmana Colonies : Sasanas**

The grant of land to brahmanas led to the establishment of new brahmnana colonies in Orissa. A gift of single village to hundreds of brahmanas was definitely helpful in creating brahmanical settlements<sup>2</sup>. many grants of this periods show that the rulers took every possibility to establish new brahmanical pockets, henceforth invited them from different parts of the country<sup>3</sup>. The gift villages were known as sasana as they were created by tamra sasanas (copper plates). Even today numerous villages of modern Orissa bear names with the suffix sasana thereby indicating that they were originally villages gifted by the rulers.



A number of brahmanas also migrated to Orissa from other parts of the country. Orissa was at that time one of the main religious centres and meeting points of various religious trends. The Bhubaneswar prasasti<sup>4</sup> refers to Bhatta Bhavadeva, a brahmana of savarna gotra who was from the village siddhala in Radha, confirms the brahmanical migration to Orissa. The Gangas, who had matrimonial relations with the Cholas of south India, invited south Indian brahmanas to settle in Orissa. The Bhubaneswar inscription<sup>5</sup> of Narasimhadeva, dated A.D. 1396, refers to the ascetics of chodadesa, Pandyadesa and kanchidesa who were settled in Orissa. These brahmanas were called Dakhinatya brahmanas.

A legend from Jajpur relates that somavamsi king Yajatikesari invited ten thousand brahmanas from North India to perform then Asvamedha yajna (horse sacrifices) at Jajpur where the stone steps at the Vaitarani River are still called Asvamedha ghata. This legend contained a historical tradition about systematic settlement of a large group of brahmanas under the somavamsi is the process which started from 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and continued till the Ganga and Gajapati periods. Madala Panji<sup>6</sup> also says that king Anangabhimadeva, the re-builder of the temple of Jagannatha had established 450 brahmana colonies in Puri district.

The Magas or the Sakadvipsis who migrated from Persia, were a well-recognized community of brahmanas in Orissa<sup>7</sup>. Tradition says that king Narasimhadeva under the influence of these brahmanas constructed the sun temple at konark.

Besides these Mega brahmanas a number of brahmanas migrated from Bengal to Orissa with the vaishnava saint sri chaitanya and settled at Puri<sup>8</sup>. Not only that, it may well be argued that a number of brahmanas might have come to Orissa from west Bengal because of the Muslim invasion and social chaos existing in Bengal during the medieval times.

## ii) Different Sections of Brahmins : Their Gotras and Pravaras

Though Matsya Purna condemned the resident brahmanas of Orissa, they are mentioned on equal terms with the brahmanas of other parts of India<sup>9</sup>. A Rastrakuta charter<sup>10</sup> dated A.D. 926, of the time of Indra III refers to five classes of brahmanas on the territorial basis, in which the brahmanas of Orissa found a place. They were saraswatha, kanyakubja, Utkala (Orissa), Mithill and Gauda. Contrary to Bengal brahmanas<sup>11</sup> the brahmanas of Orissa were not classified according to their places of origin. In Orissa profession was taken to decide the status of brahmanas. The brahmanas performing priestly function were regarded as superior class brahmanas and in the later times known as the oriya or sasani brahmanas, whereas the brahmanas of lower professions like agriculture, trade were considered as inferior brahmanas and later on were known as the jharue or halue brahmanas. Even today in Orissa this denomination of a section of the brahmanas are prevalent.



Besides the territorial and functional sections, the brahmanas were divided on the basis of gotra, pravara, sakha which are mentioned in the inscriptions. The inscriptions provide details of their original home, names of ancestors, gotras pravaras and charanas. The main distinction recognized among the brahmanas were those of the gotras and pravaras which were the family lineage. The gotras which continued with little modification to the present day defined as an exogamous patrilineal group whose members trace their descent back to a common ancestor<sup>12</sup>. Another section pravara defined as a stereotyped list of names of ancient risi or seers who are believed at specific points on the sacrificial ritual<sup>13</sup>. The brahmanas of Orissa used different titles which indicate their rank and scholarship. Among the titles, Bhatta, sarma, swami, upadhyaya, Acharya, misra seemed to be more popular. The copper plate inscriptions give the names of a number of gotras and pravaras of the brahmanas like Bharadvaja, Kausika, Atreya, Vatsya, Kautsya, Haritoka, Maudgalya, Sandilya, Kaundinya, Jatukarna, Gargeya, Gautama, Kasyapa etc..<sup>14</sup>

### iii) Functions of the Brahmanas :

#### a. Worship and Performance of Religious Rites

The main function performed by the brahmanas were worship and performance of religious rites. The number of brahmanas performing these functions must have been fairly large. They were getting land grants for worship in various temples for the attainment of religious merits of the donors. The donors were generally kings, members of the royal family, officials and landed aristocrats. In this way they had acquired considerable property and prestige for their functions as priests.

The construction of numerous temples and religious establishments in this period may provide us an idea of the number of priests attached to these temples scattered in different parts of Orissa. Besides their function as priests, they used to perform a number of social functions of vital importance like coronation ceremony and funerals etc. Kavi Vishnu das in his kavya kalavati,<sup>15</sup> tells about a brahmana who mediates in a marriage settlement. Some of them have also adopted the profession of astrologer. The Orissa museum plates<sup>16</sup> of Anangabhimadeva III, recorded the names of some brahmana astrologers (Sarvajna).

#### b. Brahmana Officials

The integration of various sub-regions of Orissa in medieval times and territorial expansion of the kingdom led to the recruitment of a large number of brahmanas for running the administrative machinery. The frequent mention of brahmana officials in the inscriptions shows that they formed the main bulk of officials in medieval Orissa. The Nagari, paltes<sup>17</sup> of Anangabhimadeva III, dated A.D. 1231, refer to a brahmana officer Gangadhara Acharya of putimasha gotra who was serving as a sasanadhikarin. The Alalpur plates<sup>18</sup> of Narasimhadeva II, dated A.D. 1294, refer to a koshadhyaksha named Halayudha who was a brahmana of vatsa gotra



having the Bhargava, chyuvana, Apnuvat, Aruva, Jamadagnya, Pravaras and was a student of kanaya branch of Yajurveda. Many such inscriptions show that the brahmanas were holding a variety of official posts.

Sometimes the brahmanas served as ministers. Narahari Tirtha, the Dvaita pontiff, who is known from the inscriptions<sup>19</sup> at simachalam and srikurmam (A.D. 1261 – 1293) served as a regent during the minority of bhanudeva I and later became his minister. The Gopinathapur inscription<sup>20</sup> refers to a prominent minister Gopinatha Mahapatra who served under king kapilesvaradeva and helped him to win wars against the sultans of Bengal and Malwa. Both he and his elder brother Narayana were the sons of the royal priest lakshmana Purohita and were ministers under king Kapilesvaradeva<sup>21</sup>. The Purohita played a vital role in the day – to – day administration. He was the chief counselor of the king on religious matter.

Besides serving in the civil posts, they also served as successful military officers. The Dirghasi inscription<sup>22</sup>, dated A.D.1075, states that Banapati defeated the rulers of Vengi, Utkala, Kimidi, Gidrisinghi and one Daddarnava. He was the son of Gokarna, a brahmana of Atreya gotra. He came from a hereditary family of Pratiharas.

### c. Education and Learning

Education and leaning were also important functions of brahmanas. Many inscriptions refer to them who were conversant with the Vedas and the sastras. Some of them were attached to the educational institutions and monasteries for the purpose of teaching being patronized and financed by the kings. The Orissa Museum plates<sup>23</sup> of Anagabhimadeva III, refers to a math where the Vedas, Vyakaranas and Puranas were taught and also record the grant of nine Vatis of land grant for its maintenance.

A number of brahmana scholars adorned the court of the Ganga and Gajapati kings. Visvanatha kaviraj and Yogisvara patra were famous court poets in the time of the Gangas<sup>24</sup>. Three reputed scholars namely Jalesvara Misra, Narayana Misra and Narasimha Vajapeyi flourished during the reign of kapilendradeva<sup>25</sup>. Kavidindima Jivadeva Acharya who composed Bhakti Bhagavata in Sanskrit was the spiritual guide of the Gajapati king Prataprudravdeva. He obtained eight golden flywhisks, one golden umbrella and a drum a reward form the king for his contribution towards the cause of leaning<sup>26</sup>.

### c. Other Professions : Agriculture, Trade

Evidence of the period show that brahmanas were engaged in other professions like agriculture and trade against the conduct mentioned for them in the Dharmasastras. In Northern India also as stated by Alberuni<sup>27</sup> (11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) it is found that they traded in clothes and betel nuts through the vaisyas. It may be presumed that some of the brahmanas might have left their functions as priests



devoting themselves in agriculture and trade as their number had increased. Sarala Dasa in his Mahabharata<sup>28</sup> says that Sureswara Panda was cultivating land by a daily labourer Tapati. Some of the brahmanas were personally tilling the soil. Jagamohana Ramayana<sup>29</sup> states that santha Panda, a brahmana maintaining his family by gardening.

A group of brahmanas also had adopted trade as their profession. Their number however, seems to be very small. It is interesting to note that though the sale of horses by brahmanas was forbidden by manu<sup>30</sup>, a small group of brahmanas practiced it. Two inscriptions<sup>31</sup> from srikurman, one in Telugu and the other in Oriya, dated A.D. 1402, refer to one Risidanayaka, son of pragonda upadhyaya ad grandson of Visnudasa Upadhyaya was a trader in horses (Ghoda vanijara) and a Kalinga vyapari. This type of trade in horses by brahmanas was prevalent in northern India also<sup>32</sup>.

Some of the brahmanas had also taken the profession of masonry. The sobhaneswara inscription<sup>33</sup> of srivaidyanatha, states that savanna, a brahmana by caste was a great artist who constructed the Siva temple.

The above discussions show that the brahmanas played a vital role in medieval Orissa. They introduced the Vedic culture, Sanskrit education and leaning and contributed to the material prosperity of the people. They also proved eligible for administrative machinery and served in various posts for collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order. However, later on some changes in the profession of brahmanas could be traced. The process of grant of land to brahmanas helped to bring the land under cultivation. Subsequently as the number of brahmanas went on increasing possibly some of them had left their religious functions and turned to agricultural activities.

In the tribal areas, like Bhumi territories they brought the local chiefs in the fourfold of kshatriyahood<sup>34</sup>. The brahmanas connected them with the illustrious Rajput class of North-western India by making mythological and fictitious genealogy. They spread the brahmanical rites such as initiation with the sacred thread, observance of the Vedic rituals in marriage and funeral rites, maintenance of Hindu idols and temples. They also associated with the celebration of various festivals. They introduced various taboos such as avoidance of food like beef, pork and chicken, restriction on the freedom of the women folk in movement and in forms of marriage, avoidance of practice of widow remarriage.

### **Kshatriyas**

Kshatriyas as a caste are rarely mentioned in the Orissan records. This might be because of the fact that the practice of stating their caste was not popular during this period. The kshatriyas mainly consisted of the royal family and state officials. They were next to the brahmanas in importance and status in social



hierarchy. They formed the least population in the society. They occupied the main posts in the governmental administration and army. The posts like visayapati, Durgapala, senapati, Sandhivigraha, Mahasamanta were mainly occupied by them. Hiuen Tsang saw the kshatriyas as a race of kings in India. He says, "the second order is that of the kshatriyas, the race of the kings; this order has held sovereignty for generations".<sup>35</sup> They were well trained in the art of warfare. To fight gallantly on the battlefield was their sacred duty. The kings were personally taking leading role in war. In the peacetime they were engaged in administration and public welfare.

The period marks the genesis of the process of ksatriyaisation in Orissa<sup>36</sup>. Several dynasties of Orissa such as the Sailodbhavas, the Bhaumakaras, the Tungas, the Bhanjas, the Sulkis were local tribal chiefs and they were improvised into respectable kshatriyas by brahmanical association. The acceptance of ksatriya status was essentially an attempt to prove status by birth and to acquire the appropriate and legitimate lineage. The earlier dynasties are all neatly classified into two categories: the Suryavamsis and the Chandravamsis. This system became prototype of all of early medieval India seeking ksatriya genealogies and Orissan rulers being no exception to it. Thus, it seems that many aboriginal chiefs were raised to the position of kshatriyas due to the tendency of upward mobility in the caste structure.

It is generally believed that between the thirteenth and sixteenth century's tribal kingdoms in the forest tracts emerged under the ksatriya princes who traced their origin for the lunar Rajput princes of western India<sup>37</sup>. The ethnic and archaeological evidences amply prove that the local princes like the Tungas and Mallas were operative within the expanding Gajapati empire of Orissa. Even now the pockets of brahmana villages in the forest tracts with Bhumi suffix had population from Orissa who conform to the religious festivities like Ratha Yatra as well as hymns and religious customs of Orissa.

The local militia of this period consisted of Paikas or Khandayats, they actually belonged to the cultivation class. They used to cultivate land in peacetime and took weapons at the times of war. In addition, the tribals who took part in wars later claimed the status equivalent to the militia cultivator caste of khandayat and were assimilated in the process of ksatriyaization.

Many important military and civil offices were held by the kshatriyas. The Puri inscription<sup>38</sup> of Anangabhimadeva III, dated A.D. 1225, refers to an officer named surasenapati who might be a ksatriya official. From the official designation of senapati it appears that he was an army official. It never implies his caste and origin. Perhaps, except the brahmanas it was not a general practice to mention the caste of kshatriyas. The Bhubaneswar inscription<sup>39</sup> of Anangabhimadeva III, dated A.D. 1238, refers to a similar officer named Govinda Senapati, son of Gaveka Senadhyaksha. It seems that he was a ksatriya official.

Besides the military function, the law digests allowed the kshatriyas to



follow the profession of an agriculturist only in times of necessity<sup>40</sup>. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century some of the kshatriyas have taken agriculture as their profession in Orissa. Sarala Dasa<sup>41</sup> says that king Daradasena maintained his army for twelve years by the support of agriculture.

### **Karanas : Kayasthas**

The constant transfer of land and land revenue to brahmanas, officials and temples from the gupta period onwards led to the growth of a scribe or kayastha community. A large number of writers and record keepers had to be employed to draft documents of the land and villages. Frequent transfer of land needed careful recording in order to avoid and settle land disputes. This whole work was done by a class of writers who were known by various names such as kayastha, karana, karnika, Adhikarta, Pastapala, Lekhaka, Dharmalekhin, Akasapatalika and Aksapatalidhikrta<sup>42</sup>. In the initial stage literate members of the higher varnas were recruited as kayastha or scribes to meet the fiscal and administrative need of the state. But gradually the scribes were recruited from different varnas like sudras and vaisyas.

In Orissa, from about 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. kayasthas came to exist as a caste. The Dasapalla grant<sup>43</sup> of the Nanda king Devananda II of the 11<sup>th</sup> century refers to a kayastha minister. In the later Ganga period they were such a dominating caste in Orissa that they adopted local names as Karanas. Some rose to high positions, received land grants and held feudatory status. The Parlakimedi plates<sup>44</sup> of the time of vajrahasa V, assigned to 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. mention a person from a kayastha caste rising to the status of a minister. It states that the messenger of the grant was vachchpayya of the kayastha family who enjoyed the status of a minister of the feudatory lord Darparaya.

The kayasthas in Orissa belonged to the Kasyapa gotra is known from the Arasavalli plates<sup>45</sup> of vajrahasa III, dated A.D. 1060. It registers the grant of a village Arisavalli to siriyapa Nayak, vaji-Nayak, Gundama Nayaka and Namkana Nayak, sons of Nadupana Nayaka a kayastha of kasyapa gotra.

The functions of the kayasthas were not only to write documents but they were also in-charge of records, accounts and revenue departments. Besides this, they were appointed as ministers, high royal executives and sometimes probably commanders of army. During the reign of Vajrahasa V, a lady named gudana Nayaki who endowed fifty sheep for burning a perpetual lamp in honour of god madhukeswara, describes herself as belonging to a kayastha family and wife of the king's commander Madhuia<sup>46</sup>.

Individuals belonging to the kayastha caste also played a noticeable role in the sphere of learning and literature and the achievements of few of them are recorded in some of the inscriptions. Tathagataraksita<sup>47</sup>, who belonged to Orissa



was a physician by profession and kayastha by caste. He was a reputed professor of tantra in the vikramsila university during this period<sup>48</sup>.

The official positions of the kayasthas, especially in the village and local administration, later on appear to have become hereditary and crystallized into as many sub-castes according to their functional titles and called at the present day as srikarna, pattanayaka, Mohanty, qanungo, Dandapata etc.

### Vaisyas

The vaisyas formed a small community in medieval Orissa. Economic development of the society dependent mainly upon them. The inscriptions show that some vaisyas agrahara villages were established by the rulers. The Chicacole copper plate grant<sup>49</sup> of Madhukarnava, dated A.D.1024, records the organization of a vaisya – agrahara by uniting potagrama Hondarabada and morokhini villages. Perhaps these villages were established for a community of professional people to fulfill the economic need of the society.

Agriculture and trading were the main activities of the vaisyas. The sresthis belonged to this community and played a main role in trade and commerce of medieval Orissa. Hiuen Tsang describes trade as their chief calling on life<sup>50</sup>. Agricultural production and oversea trade were conducted by them. The traders of kalinga who were carrying trade in over-sea countries like Burna, Ceylon, siam, suvarnavipa, Cambodia and Funan might be from the vaisya community. They were the main carriers of culture to southeast Asia. The rural market were also organized by the vaisyas. In the hattas, it is found that many sub-caste of vaisya community transacting the business. The Nagari plates<sup>51</sup> of Anangabhimadeva, dated A.D.1230, records a list of vaisya traders. They were a perfumer (gandhika), a worker or dealer in coanchshells (sankhika) a goldsmith (svarnakara) and a brazier (kamsayika). The economic condition of the vaisyas seemed to be very sound. They were rich enough to donate land to brahmanas and temples. The chikkavalasa plates<sup>52</sup> of vajrahasata III, dated A.D. 1059, mention the gift of a land to a brahmana by a sresthin named mallaya.

In spite of sound condition of some vaisyas, the period marks the decline of the community, some of the smṛti texts<sup>53</sup> Grhastha-kanda and Mitaksara prescribed more or less same occupation for both the vaisyas and sudras. This might be due to the improvement in the social and economic status of the sudras. As a result, some of the vaisyas might have left their traditional profession. An epigraphic record<sup>54</sup> at Simhachalam, dated A.D. 1382, mentions one gurudas of Vaisyakula serving as a Mahasenapati. The Ganjam plate<sup>55</sup> of vajrahasata III, dated A.D. 1068, records donation of a village to Gokana Nayaka a vaisya vamsodbhava. His title shows that he was a Nayaka.



## Sudras

The sudras were numerous and belonged to the lowest stratum of the society. They were not a homogenous caste but comprised of agricultural and petty peasants, artisans, craftsmen, manual workers, servants, attendants and those following low occupations.

Despite various disabilities imposed by the Smriti literature, the economic condition of the sudras was a remarkable feature of the society. Many sudras were promoted to the ksatriya status and many of them claimed the status of a vaisya. The Arasavalli plates<sup>56</sup> of vajrahasa refer to a Nayaka who was a sudra. The artisans and the craftsman who occupied the low status from the early times<sup>57</sup>, got a higher status, patronized by the rulers in this period. Many of the sudra menial labourers were attached to the temples for the service of the god. A stone inscription<sup>58</sup> of Govinda Senapati registers grant of land to a group of persons for their daily service to the temple like sweeping, line washing and supply of earthen pots.

According to traditional view, sudras were not allowed to study the Vedas, Smrti, and Puranas<sup>59</sup>. But sudras of the medieval Orissa occupied an important place in the sphere of education and learning. Sarala Dasa<sup>60</sup> a sudra agriculturalist has composed Mahabharata, a monumental work in oriya literature. Balaram Dasa<sup>61</sup> another sudra poet has composed oriya Ramayana.

A section of the people called hadi, domba, chandala who were cleaning villages and engaged in other dirty services were treated as untouchables. The washerman (rajaka), shoemaker (chamakara), fisherman (kaivartta), hunters (savaras), basket makers (dombi) belonged to this category. Generally they were treated as outcastes in the society and lived outside the villages.

With the rise of different threads of religious movements like sakta-tantric cults and Nath cult, some sudras have gave up their duty of service and turned into wandering mendicants. Many tantric teachers and siddhacharyas of the medieval period were from fisherman, leather worker, woodworker and domba communities<sup>62</sup>.

It has already been seen that caste as a function hardly existed in medieval Orissa. Profession was not restricted to the castes. The people of lower castes were doing duties of higher castes. So the occupational mobility was not unknown in medieval Orissa. From the evidence furnished by the work of the oriya poet sarala Dasa, it appears that groups of people from the pastoral caste could switch over to agriculture. Similarly sudras were represented as agriculturalists which indicates that some of the sudras and aboriginals like hadi, chandalas, have abandoned their respective traditional occupations and resorted to agriculture as a new sub-caste or castes.



These examples of occupational mobility indicate that agriculture was the refuse for the spillovers from other functional castes. It is perhaps mainly due to the availability of potential arable land and even perhaps a favorable man land ratio.

### Aborigines and Tribals

Orissa is mainly a tribal populated state. Except the undivided coastal districts Puri, Cuttack and Balasore, other districts are populated by the tribals. The chariya<sup>63</sup> poems of the oriya vajrajana siddhas, which are said to have been composed from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. mention the tribals like dombs, sabararas and bhills. The Narasimhapur charter<sup>64</sup> of the somavamsi king udyotakesari Mahabhavagupta IV, of the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D., refers to the habitation of a dominating caste of the aboriginals termed as sabararas in Orissa.

Sarala Dasa's Mahabharata<sup>65</sup> provides sufficient information about the life of the tribals in the then Orissa. In the sabha parva he has described about the meeting of srikrishna with a Kandha (Khond) king Bhaskara. He was wearing various ornaments like toda, jagudala, ratnamala and karnaphula. Krishna requested him to supply deer, wild pig and rhinoceros's meat for the rajasuya ceremony.

The life-style of the tribals can be understood from the chariya Gitikas<sup>66</sup>. Savarmen put on tiger skins and adorned their bodies with feather of peacock, necklaces and earnings of gunja fruits. They dwelt far away from the human habitation. Drinking was their usual habit. Hunting was their main occupation and used to go to distant places in search of animals. Sarala Dasa<sup>67</sup> has depicted the life of the Savaras in detail. They baked their food in fire, the practice which is still prevalent in the tribal communities of Orissa. Their festivals begin with the ripening of the china, kagani paddy.

This period marks the process of Sanskritisation among the tribals. Tradition says that Lord Jagannatha first used to be worshipped by the sabararas<sup>68</sup>. His priest, belonged to a caste called daitapati and is said to be descendants of the savaras who used to worship the deity in ancient times<sup>69</sup>. These daitapatis has already entered into the Hindu caste system.

An instance of how the savaras have merged with the Hindu is provided by the ancestry of the famous Tena Sauri khandayats of orissa<sup>70</sup>. their ancestors are said to have been born of a king of Orissa by a saora lady of Padmini class, whom he had married. This system a Sanskritisation among the tribals was more prominent from the Ganga period with the establishment of Lord Jagannatha as imperia deity.

### Traces of Social Conflict

In the Varna based society, the rise of the kayasthas or Karanas as a group of professional elite caste might have undermined the monopoly of the brahmanas as writers and scribes. Appointment of kayastha ministers and officers naturally



might have been resented by the brahmanas who had monopolized such high offices. As ministers, scribes, record keepers, the kayasthas must have caused constant troubles to the brahmanas who formed a considerable class of donees, which might have brought a social tension between the two communities which lingers even to the present day in Orissa.

Sarala Dasa's Mahabharata, which reflect the poets own day-to-day experiences as well as contemporary political and historical happenings, describes a battle between the brahmanas and chandalas, in the Adiparva<sup>71</sup>. whatever may be the fact, the battle symbolizes the eternal brahmana versus non-brahmana conflict in Orissa.

The rise of Chaitanya movement also led to a social tension in the society. It increased an antagonism between the brahmanas and the chaitanyites. The brahmanas as a class were always hostile to the rising tide of the cult of chaitanya and some of their ceremonies. The Panchasakha group of vaisnava poets have raised their voice against the domination of the brahmanas. Balarama Dasa in his Vedanatasara Gupta Gita<sup>72</sup> and Achyutanda in his Sunya samhita<sup>73</sup> has recounted how they were ill treated by the brahmanas for their spiritual knowledge. In the Malikas<sup>74</sup> (prophecies) Achyutananda Dasa has written that in future the brahmanas would deteriorate to the level of the sudras. The great orthodox exponents of chaitanya faith Ramananda, shyamananda and baladeva vidyabhusana were non-brahmanas and the brahmanas might not have liked their dominance in the society.

### **Position of Women**

In this period, women occupied a higher position in the society. We do not get any evidence about the practice of early marriage and sati system in Orissa. The system of kanyadana was there. The parlakimedi copperplate grant<sup>75</sup> of Ganga king Anantavarman I records the donation of Talthera village to brhamana vishnusomacharya on the eve of the kanyadana ceremony. Very like king Anantavaraman gave in marriage a brahmana bride to vishnusomacharya and donated the village Talthera as dowry.

It is difficult to know whether widow marriage system was there. Higher castes like brahmanas, kshatriyas generally did not allow widow marriage. It might have been prevalent in lower castes. Many widows were turned into nuns and lived in the monasteries. In the brahmana society they remained in the houses, wearing white clothes, discarding all ornaments and by performing castes and austerities. They spent their time in religious performances and discussions.

The royals queens were continued to live after the death of their husbands. They were not only interested in religious and cultural affairs but also in politics. In the time of necessity the royal queens also were taking part in state politics thus coming to the throne. There are instances of the bhaumakara queens ascending the



throne after death of their husbands<sup>76</sup>. Kalyana Devi, the queen of Dharmaraja II of the sailodbhava dynasty was a great patron of Jainism. She had donated lands to the Jaina arhats Nasichandra and Prabuddhachandra<sup>77</sup>. The somavamsi queens have also patronized the construction of a number of temples<sup>78</sup>. The Ganga and Gajapati queens were devoted more towards religious affairs than state administration. Very often they were donating lands to the brahmanas and temples for ritual performance of the deity, supply of oil for the perpetual lamp and food offerings to the temples. On many occasions, the queens of anantavaraman chodaganaga deva have come down to south for performance of worship in the madhukesvara temple at Mukhalingam<sup>79</sup>. Madhavi Devi, the wife of Balinayaka who was the senapati of vajrahastadeva III, has glorified herself by describing the achievements of her husband in a temple inscription at Mukhalingam<sup>80</sup>.

The relief sculptures of the temples of this period throw much light on the dress, ornaments of women and their cultural activities in the field of dance, drama and music<sup>81</sup>. they were fond of ornaments of which necklaces, ear-rings, anklets and girdles were more prominent. They were participating in the performance of dance, drama and music as seen the temple sculptures of medieval Orissa. Women of the higher class of society and the dancers were wearing linen and thin clothes under the waist with beautiful folds and plits. There were not much coverings on the upper portions of the body, but only a bodice to cover the breasts.

The above survey of the social conditions medieval Orissa shows that the society underwent significant changes with its continuity. These changes were due to development in economic system and the process of state formation. Though the society was based on the traditional Varna system it was progressive. The hierarchical social structure was divided on the basis of the caste system. There was the process of Sanskritisation operated through the land grants to the brahmanas in the tribal belts. Also through the process of ksatriyaisation a number of tribal chiefs came to the fourfold of Hindu Varna system, thus claiming the status of the kshatriyas. The society was not static. There was both horizontal and vertical mobility in the society. The rise and growth of new castes like karana, fragmentation of the sudras due to acculturation and peasantization of the tribes, sometimes brought tension to the society.

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# **STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: AVENUES AND SOURCES**

**(With Special Reference to South India)**

**P. Hymavathi**

The mid-twentieth century had drawn the attention of Indian historians to a more integrated approach to history i.e., History in its totality and focused it as a process of integration of various factors – political, social, economic, cultural, geographical, scientific and technological and the consequent need for interdisciplinary approach in research. Though some budding efforts are made in the early writings, which started as a part of the Swadeshi movement, to bring into light some information regarding the works on science and the technology, it was not seriously taken up by the succeeding generation of historians, who were much led by the Marxist interpretation of history. They focused on the socio-economic factors and tried to provide a framework into which Indian cultural processes could not fit. But they succeeded in drawing the attention of researchers to the role of social and economic factors in evolving changes or developments in human history and conceptualizing them and providing a historical perspective, but as projected by European scholars. If we come to the history of science and technology, there might be some similarities and differences in the developments from one cultural area to another at different periods of human history and also the utilization of those ideas and techniques could be seen as different from one culture area to another basing on the geographical factors, value system and nature of needs, etc. That's why one should be very cautious while interpreting the scientific ideas and technologies and they should be thoroughly studied and carefully analyses before interpreting. For this, the basic research may be allowed not to discourage or frighten the young researchers in this aspect of historical study in the initial stage. Studies in this direction can be made use of in two ways: Firstly they can be used to analyse the role of science and technology in the historical process and secondly to provide information to the scientists and technologists to know the roots of concerned branches of scientific and technological knowledge along with the factors contributed for the genesis of knowledge base, the way that it was received by different groups in different areas in different periods of time, its impact on the value system of respective group and the manner in which it was promoted or discouraged and the reasons there of..

Keeping in view the recent developments in historical research and also the aspirations of different social groups, some educational institutions and Universities have incorporated courses in History of Science and Technology in their curriculum. The former is to bestow historical background of the development of sciences and technologies regarding chronological order of the inventions, their details, stages in developments, their philosophical base, etc. But these studies have not yet led to developing a fresh outlook on the past with social, economic and cultural impact over the genesis of inventions or the way in which they were exploited. But a



conscious effort is still going on to socialise scientific and technological fruits and to bring about active involvement of scientists and technologists in socio-economic and cultural milieu.

The latter is its entry into the curriculum of history. If this can be explained more effectively the social and economic analysis of science and technology, with a perusal as to how certain technologies developed at certain periods making use of scientific thought, how they were organised, their objectives and goals, their role in different regions and why they were well received or rejected or modified, for which an integrated approach is needed.

Firstly the reason for over-emphasis on the history of western science and technology can be attributed to the fact that scientific and technological achievements of the European cultural arena as are taken as real achievements of modern science and technology which itself is quite relevant to the present day need. But it is a regrettable thing that we failed here to notice how much loss that we have been bearing by accepting uncritically the so-called "modernisation" in this regard. The Asian and African countries, which became colonies of Europe, were made to serve for the successes of the Industrial Revolution for centuries by providing raw material and other resources and as markets to the imperial powers. In the words of A. Rahman, "What are called benefits of technology and science in Europe could be termed destructive effects in the third world. An indisputably beneficial invention, just as steam navigation, when seen from the side of the third world has a different story to tell— disruption of societies, their subjugation, ruthless exploitation and mass murder of a native population."<sup>3</sup>

This phase in human history itself is an ample example to understand the role of science and technology in the political, social, economic and cultural aspects. The imperial powers after establishing their colonies in Asia and Africa shaped the policy of science and technology in such a way to suit their economic and political gains and to establish their cultural hegemony at the base level. If we take the example of India, we can see the attempts made by the western countries in different stages. In the beginning when they came for our products the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French appreciated our knowledge especially in the sciences like medicine, mathematics, pharmacology and pharmacy, collected information from the natives, recorded them and published books by the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century which was later translated into many other European languages. The British, who were very anxious in this regard, started viewing the things very critically, keeping eye on the Dutch and the French, her commercial enemies. If we go through the British records and travelogues, we can observe their deliberate attempt to discourage the psychological morale of the native intellectuals, by criticising every bit of Indian culture as 'superstitious, unscientific and without common sense'. At the same time, if we take up a comparative study of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French records, they give a different story regarding the land full of wonders and talents. In this context, one should recollect the fact that it was the knowledge in Botany,



Pharmacology and the textile and textile printing technologies and many other handicraft skills that attracted and made them to come all the way from Europe to this country and it were these technologies and the knowledge base that made their commercial transactions with other continents successful.

As India was awake after centuries of stagnation, it could not find time to formulate its own policy of Science and Technology that was competent enough to make the nation stand in the competitive economy. But in such a period of transition, the government and the elite would have taken effective steps simultaneously to formulate its own policy of Science and Technology which is conducive to evolve into a system of its own by synthesising the meritorious elements of indigenous and foreign systems. This was not materialised as the educated people, whose mind-set was conceptualised in the western cultural framework, had a very low opinion on the scientific and technological base of our country. They did not even try to understand the cultural and philosophical roots of our sciences. As a result of it, the scientists and technologists found themselves delinked with the rest of the society and their findings lost the socio-cultural base, which is a pre-requisite for a meaningful and successful policy of Science and Technology.

Though late, it is the responsibility of the historians and researchers to pursue studies in this direction so as to analyse how Indian civilization and culture have evolved through the ages with the help of technological development and scientific knowledge. The work so far done in this direction was mostly by Sanskrit Scholars and by those who were well versed in Sanskrit in addition to their subject of specialization such as medicine, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, etc. Among such early works, the essays of P.K.Gode on various aspects of science and technology such as medicine, pharmacology, perfumery, agriculture, horticulture, etc. compiled into three volumes entitled "Studies in Indian Cultural History" and published between 1961-69, is a pioneering work.<sup>5</sup> It is very much helpful for the researchers working on medieval Indian history as he provided basic information from various indigenous works on sciences and foreign accounts with a critical approach to source material. Further researchers can be taken up to provide socio-economic and cultural linkages. P.C.Ray's *History of Chemistry in Ancient and Medieval India*<sup>6</sup>, Achanta Laxmipati's essays and books on Indian medicine<sup>7</sup>, P.V.Sharma's work on *History of Ayurveda*<sup>8</sup>, D.V.Subha Reddy's *Glimpses of Health and Medicine in Mauryan Empire*<sup>9</sup>, another work in Telugu dealing with Telugu literary sources for the history of medicine<sup>10</sup> and many other essays published in the *Bulletin of Indian Institute of History of medicine*, and B.Rama Rao's essays, published in the same journal are valuable contribution which help the researchers to undertake investigations, into health and hygiene, dietetic habits, customs and medical gleanings, etc.

D.P.Chattopadhyaya's *Science and Society in Ancient India*<sup>11</sup> throws light on the contribution of early Indian scientists to the ocean of knowledge, with strong



base of scientific and philosophical analysis. O.P.Jaggi's work in 13 volumes on History of Indian Science and Technology, Deepak kumar's Technology and the Raj<sup>13</sup>, etc. come to the rescue of researchers in this emerging field of research. "Situating the History of Science" edited by Dhruv Raina and Irfan Habib<sup>14</sup> helps in methodological approach. The efforts of A.Rahman in initiating researches in the field of History of Science and Technology are commendable. "Intellectual Colonisation of Science", Science, Technology and Economic Development and many other essays and edited works are very inspiring and informative to a researcher especially in the field of history of medieval technology.

Indian Response to European Technology<sup>15</sup> and Building Construction in Mughal India<sup>16</sup> of A.J.Qaisar deal with the technological development during the Mughal period, the observations of the foreign travelers, impact of western technology, mutual exchange of technical know-how, the wave-length of Indian response to new techniques, etc. Irfan Habib's contribution can never be ignored in this context. It was he who mainly responsible for popularising this aspect of historical research. His essays<sup>17</sup>, topographical Atlas of the Mughal India, Cambridge Economic History of India, (Ed) exhibit this kind of perception through out.

### **History of Science and Technology in South India: Avenues and Sources**

Though some work is done to a considerable extent with regard to north Indian context, much work is not done so far on the the history of Science and Technology in south India. This part of the country by virtue of its geographical location played a significant role in the history of human civilization. The south Indians traded with far off lands through their sea-ports on the east and the west and established colonies. Their cultural ideas also were carried to these places along with their goods of merchandise. The artisans and craftsmen had developed from time to time wonderful skills and implements needed for the ramification of several techniques. The textiles, ornaments, toys and drugs of this region enjoyed greater demand in the other country's of ancient civilizations. Ptolemy's work and the Periples of the Erithrean Sea reveals that South Indian textiles gained good market in Rome even by 2<sup>nd</sup> c.A.D.Marco Polo, who visited the Telugu speaking country in 13<sup>th</sup> century referred to the fine quality of textiles produced in this region and which looked like a spider's web. He writes, "There is neither king nor queen in the world but might be glad to wear them"<sup>18</sup>.

Inventions are the outcome of favourable conditions such as political peace, economic stability, conducive atmosphere for the growth of trade and commerce. When the northern part of India was conquered by the Muslims and the Delhi sultanate was established, scholars in sciences emigrated into South India with the hope for protection to their works and of their posterity. They were well received by the South Indian kings and also the religious institutions like temples and mathas. By that time, north India became "a part of the Islamic world", and everywhere central Asian experts were employed and the local artisans became mere workers



under them. But in South India, the artisans enjoyed freedom to exhibit their creativity, while receiving the meritorious systems of the other cultural areas and improving their own systems.

Sources mention that scientists were patronised by the Rayas of Vijayanagara and inscriptions refer to the work done by the illustrious brothers Madhava Sayana and Bhognatha for the development of arts and letters. Sayana established an academic college, where scholars versed in various branches of learning were gathered and encouraged to write commentaries on ancient texts and also to compose independent works<sup>19</sup>. His works *Sarvadarsana Sangraha* and *Ayurveda Sudhanidhi*, the latter being yet a palm leaf manuscript<sup>20</sup>, are very useful in tracing out the chemical technology and medical science. *Vaidyaraja Vallabha* of Laxmana Pandita is a medical work composed at the behest of Bukka II<sup>21</sup>. In the policy of patronising scientists, there took place a greater change during the days of Krishnadeva Raya who opined that scientists should not be granted much wealth and they should be left with enough resources to feed themselves and their family members.<sup>22</sup> This kind of attitude naturally hinders the growth of scientific investigations as they could not be taken up without sufficient economic resources. Again, there can be seen a betterment during the reign of Aravidu dynasty, where fine arts, mathematics and crafts received patronage. Anyway, after the Sangamas, it can be seen that the state regarded it the responsibility of the religious institutions to patronise scientists. As a result of it, one feels that science and technology had grown on the pandal of religion. For example, if we refer to the works of medicine, we find the mention of *Karmavipaka*<sup>23</sup> in diagnosis along with scientific reason for the occurrence of a disease and in therapy also scientific prescription along with propitiatory acts can be seen mentioned.

The scientists from Agasthya or even the Jain and Buddhist scholars like Kundakundacarya (44B.C- 40A.D) and Nagarjunacharya of 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D to Trimallabhata (17<sup>th</sup> Century) made many investigations into the medical properties of herbal, animal, mineral and chemical substances and helped for the ramification of science and technology.<sup>24</sup> Though their approaches were different, their goal was the same, i.e., the welfare of the entire humanity and to the Jains and the Buddhists it was for the well-being of all the living creatures. The religious sects vied with each other in the development of Science and Technology, in the dissemination of knowledge through culture-based mass education, by providing medical aid etc., perhaps as a part of their propaganda mission. Keeping in view all these developments, a researcher can take up on any aspect related to the development of science and technology in South India.

“Great need calls forth great effort to discover or invent”-comes true in the efforts made by the Buddhists and the Jains to introduce alternative drugs avoiding the usage of animal substances in making medicines. It further led to the development of many metallurgical and chemical operations such as purification, incineration, calcinations of metals, sub-metals and minerals. The development of



chemistry apart from its use in producing drugs as compounds and simples, led to applied technological process in dye, perfume, leather-processing and sugar industries. There was a saying in medieval days that "Vadabhrasto-Vaidyasrestah" which means that one who failed in alchemy became an expert physician. It attests to the information in contemporary sources that people, especially, the medieval Saivites made many experiments to transmute the base metals into gold by alchemical operations. These experiments also contributed for the rapid development of not only rasa-siddha system of medicine, but also the gold-gliding and coating of copper-cooking-vessels with tin and Bidri art. Studies in this direction can be taken up for which a lot of source-material consisting of contemporary literary works, works on rasa-siddha system of medicine, local records like Kondaviti Danda Kavile, inscriptions and monuments like the Jaina Siddhula guttalu, temples like Srisalilam and Alampuram and many other temples in South India constructed with a plan to suit the chemical operations. The plan of Alampuram temple is studied by I. Sanjiva Rao with the help of the descriptions given in works on alchemy and it is identified as a rasa siddha system of medicine, where various chemico-mineral operations were taken up.<sup>25</sup> Rasaratnakara of Nityanatha Siddha refers to this temple and the availability of chemicals and minerals around the place.<sup>26</sup>

Separate studies on the contribution of the religious sects for the scientific ideas and promotion of technology can be taken up. In this context, it is to be noted that there is a general opinion among the scholars that it was because of the Jaina and Buddhist philosophies that surgery had crept into stagnation. But a serious research in this direction proves this wrong. We can find inscriptions which reveal that Jain doctors were experts in surgery, chemico-mineral medicine, and obstetrics and also in veterinary science.<sup>27</sup> Likewise the contribution of the Saiva saints for the development of chemico-mineral drugs and pharmaceutical operations is a known fact, but yet no research is undertaken in this direction.

A need for reconstructing the environmental history is felt by the modern historians. Ramachandra Guha writes, "there is no gainsaying the fact that India provides possibilities for the field of environmental history. Its ecological and cultural diversity is unmatched. It has had for millennia a rich mosaic of cultures and modes of resource use, spanning the whole range of productive activities known to humans. The coming into being of these diverse forms of resource use, and their interactions in the past and in the present, are waiting to be studied from an ecological perspective. Add to this, the intensity and rapidity of environmental change in the past two centuries and we have a research agenda that shall occupy us for years to come".<sup>28</sup> If one takes up a study on the environmental history of South India, there is a lot of untapped source material bearing on the subject. In Addition to the medical works, the works on agriculture, horticulture and meteorology provide us a wide range of source material. Krsiparasara (11<sup>th</sup> C.A.D), a work exclusively on agriculture, Vrkseyurveda of Sargnadhara and Lokopakaram of Camundaraya,



works on horticulture, Rettamata Sastram in Kannada and Sasyanandam in Telugu both on meteorology when read from an ecological perspective, yield rich source material. Especially, the last one is very important in this regard as it traces out directly the behaviour of the birds, reptiles, and insects according to the climatic changes and also the ecological prediction of the birds and its impact on agricultural operations.

As the European soldiers during the 16<sup>th</sup> century were not allowed to bring their families to India as this climate provoked sexual urges, they misbehaved with the native women and as a result of it syphilis spread in south India. The physicians immediately responded to this threat and found out remedies even by 1520 and prostitutes took every care and appointed physicians who were experts in Chemico-mineral drugs, at their houses. Like "AIDS" of today, it became a threat to the society but the way the whole society responded to face it, is an interesting thing to be known in this context on social environment.<sup>29</sup>

Medicine also can be seen as influenced by climate and physicians preferred preventive steps to avoid disease and prescribed diet basing on the change of seasons and also on the time span within a day. The art of Cuisine also was scientifically explained in the medical texts with some dos and don'ts especially with regard to mixed curries and took up deep-rooted propaganda through proverbs, nursery rhymes and also incorporating them in the customs.

There are many other aspects such as economic history which can be gleaned through the works on science including mathematics, where, we can find reflections of the contemporary trade, articles of trade, their prices weights and measures, industries coins, industries, social groups involved in trade and commerce, communication, transport, etc Commentaries and free translations made on Gaanitasara Sangraha of Mahaviracarya and Lilavati Ganita of Bhaskaracarya. Pavuluri Mallana's Ganitasara Sangraha and Vallabhendra's Lilavati are the Telugu renderings of this category between 11<sup>th</sup> century and 16<sup>th</sup> century which were translated freely with incorporations of contemporary ideas and practices.

As mentioned earlier, South Indian products, especially the textiles, precious stones, spice, toys etc. enjoyed greater demand in far off lands since at least 2<sup>nd</sup> c.A.D. The archaeological excavations at pre-historic sites conducted in all the South Indian states reveal the early development of technologies in pottery, iron-smelting, making of agricultural implements, surgical instruments made of copper and water-management techniques. The largest and the heaviest single piece of iron weighing about 8 tons and the huge iron beams used in the Sun Temple at Konark, Orissa (13<sup>th</sup> C.A.D) exhibit the engineering skill of the Indian iron-smiths. The Puri temple contains 239 iron beams, which were produced in a similar manner as the famous iron pillar of Mehrauli.

The process of iron-smelting and steel-making can be seen developed with the local technologies even by 2<sup>nd</sup> c.A.D. in Andhra and Karnataka regions.



The steel exported from Konasamudram and Nirmal (Andhra Pradesh) was used to prepare the world famous Damascus blades. The technological operation in making the Damascus steel, whose original name was wootz in colloquial language, was so unique and intricate that many countries like Persia and Italy tried it, but could not succeed in attaining the same form and quality. The subject attracted the international attention and many scholars like Carlo Panseri, Copenhagen, Malcolmson, Herbet Maryan, etc have discussed on the technological processing in comparison with other methods.<sup>30</sup> The tribals of Adilabad district also developed their own pattern of making alloy metal. The Philigree work of Karimnagar district in silver and the Pembarti brass artifacts still exhibit the traditional metal technologies

The Relics of foundries of glass industry can be seen spread all over the state. Many villages on the name of Kacavaram, Gajuvaka, Gajuladinne, Gajulapalem, etc. indicate that they were centres of glass industry. Crystal glass was produced at these centres. A medical work entitled Netradarpanam (Mirror to the eye) of Panakalaraya written between A.D. 1550-80 was aimed at explaining the spectacles to the eyes. But unfortunately, only three parts are found available and the part in which eye-glasses were prescribed is found missing.<sup>31</sup> If that chapter is found, we will be able to trace out whether such a glass was produced locally or was it imported. The contemporary literary evidences also attest to the prevalence of the practice of wearing spectacles during the Vijayanagara period in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, leather-processing methods also were developed in such a way that they were mended hard, supple, thin and inlaid, where it was used in making musical instruments, agricultural implements, garments, domestic utensils, containers of medicines, package material, military equipment, boats, puttis, in addition to its prime usage in shoe-making.

With the expansion of technologies, new social groups forming into professional organization came into existence which was identified as separate castes. For instance, the number of perfumers or gandhavadis increased largely during the early medieval period in Karnataka and Andhra regions as a result of which a new caste from among the Kapus emerged and was called as Bukkavaru in the Telangana region and dasaris in other parts of Andhradesa.

With regard to the source material for the history of science and technology, the texts on sciences and technical subjects if studied with integrated approach yield good results. For example, the medical texts of the period describe the devices used in making medicines such as bhudhara-yantra, Vidyadhara-Yantra, Valuka-yantra, Kosta-yantra, give a glimpse into the mechanical contrivances used in perfumery industry, dying and other hand; craft industries. The medical lexicons of the medieval period like Madanapala Nighantu, Dhanwanthari Nighantu, Rajanighantu, form a treasure of information regarding the agricultural and horticultural products, mineral wealth, their purification methods, flora and fauna etc. A keen study of the information helps to identify the new vegetables, fruit, roots and other herbs that entered our country from various parts of the world.



Medicine in medieval south India had assimilated many tribal and folk techniques of healing, the rasa system of medicine, took into fold the yogic system of healing, adopted the pharmaceutical methods of Persians, especially in preparing the araqas (tinctures) and shared the fruits of its research in pharmacology with other systems of medicine.<sup>33</sup>

The accounts of foreign travelers like Hieun Tsang, Alberuni(11<sup>th</sup> C),Suleiman, Marco Polo(13<sup>th</sup> C),Frair Jordanus (14<sup>th</sup> C), Barbosa, Linschoten, Garcia-Da-Orta, Fryer, John Marshall, (16<sup>th</sup> C), Tavenier, Van Rhede(17<sup>th</sup> C), etc. help researchers to get information regarding many aspects of the history of science and technology-the botanical knowledge of the physicians, the tribals, women and others like barbers, who were identified as associated with certain healing-techniques, the material management, organization of techniques, implements used, the manner in which they were used, their impact on socio-economic developments, socialization process of new ideas and techniques, the causes for stagnation at certain stages, etc. can be grasped if cautiously apply the internal criticism of each document.

In addition to the foreign accounts, South India is enriched with abundant literacy creations like prabandhas, religious and ethical literature, texts on policy, etc. which give a glimpse into this aspect of historical research. As this material is abundant in many regional languages in addition to Prakrit and Sanskrit literature, no specific references are given here.

So far archaeological sources, especially sculpture and inscriptions, are not studied keeping in view the scientific and technological aspects. That's why we can not find much information. So the researchers have to go the original records and should not depend on the translations which contain mostly the essence of the record. Even if full text is translated, some times, the problems arise with technical terms and erased or missed letters. For example, two inscriptions from Saidapur<sup>34</sup> refer to the word Kajjalisthana, which was not understood by the epigraphist and in one of the records, it is corrected as "Kajjika-sthana" when the latter is not so clear. But in both the records we do not find the translation of it or any information regarding it. As the record refers to a Jain physician, who was also a surgeon and an expert in umatantra, it was brought to the notice of medical scholars, who made use of; the translation given by the epigraphist. That's why they could not identify the other significant aspects of the record. Here 'Kajjali' means a herbo-mineral drug formula and the Jain monk according to the inscriptions, established two Kajjali-sthanas or pharmaceutical centres where arrangements were made to prepare these mineral drugs. Another important word misunderstood in this record is "Umatantra" which is suspected to be Gayatri-mantra.<sup>35</sup> But since the surgeon referred in the record was a Diggambara Jain monk, it is not probable to accept this assumption. If we go through the introductory part of any work on Rasa-vaidya, we can find a narration stating that the science of chemico-mineral pharmacy was for the first time revealed by the Goddess Parvati to Ravana-pandita,



which later came to Agasthya after some generations through a line of preceptors. It indicates that Umatantra referred in these records can be understood as a chemico-mineral pharmaceutical system and it was for the first time evolved in South India and was developed by Saiva saints. This is only one example taken to alert the researcher working on scientific or technological aspects of history.

There are many other avenues and sources where we can take up studies in the history of science and technology and thereby can be analysed their role in the socio-economic, cultural and political history of South India. It is not to claim the superiority of one region or the other or to create a dichotomy in the cultural history of the South and the North, but with a view to develop regional studies in root level studies for the analysis of the nation's contribution to the perennial flow of human civilization.

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# CONTRIBUTION OF SATYASHODHAK SAMAJ TO THE LOW CASTE PROTEST MOVEMENT IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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This paper deals with the origin, ideas and membership of the Satyashodhak Samaj, which was founded by Jotirao Phule along with, his friends and colleagues in 1873. It also deals with course of low caste protest movements under the influence of Satyashodhak Samaj. We will begin by looking at the role of these ideas which played from 1873 onwards.

Phule dreamt about 'Balistan'.<sup>1</sup> regarded this as the rule of the creator or rule of truth which Karl Marx expected in the emergence of classless society. Phule's vision was universal as that of Marx but he was not satisfied with outlining theory only. He tried to carry out the same in practice. His goal was to fight against Brahmanical domination and upliftment of the downtrodden groups such as women, Shudras and Ati-Shudras. He felt that the goal could be attained through collective action and an organized movement.

For this he expected active co-operation from his colleagues, friends and lower caste students who had completed their studies. Phule organized a meeting at Pune on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1873 where Satyashodhak Samaj was founded. It was stated that the Satyashodhak Samaj is founded by some wise Shudra men to liberate the Shudhra people from long sustained slavery executed by Brahmanical ideological groups such as Bhats, Joshis, priests and others'.<sup>2</sup> The aims and objectives are as follows;

1. The Satyashodhak Samaj aimed to spread education among the Shudras and Ati-Shudras to make them aware of their rights and to get them out from the influence of the sacred books that were made by the Brahmins for their own survival.
2. The ideology of Satyashodhak Samaj was based on Phule's ideological framework, which urged to unite all Shudras, Ati-Shudra masses. Satyashodhak Samaj ideology was the heart of non-Brahman movement.<sup>3</sup>
3. Revolting against Brahmanical culture, Satyashodhak ideology looked forward to establish an ideal society based on some principles as follows:
  1. Faith in one God (Creator)
  2. Rejection of any kind of intermediary between God and Man.
  3. Rejection of Caste System and the basic four fold Varna division of society. Faith in the idea that man's supremacy is determined by his qualities and not by his caste
  4. Faith in equality, freedom and brotherhood.<sup>4</sup>



The Samaj was a non-political body, which fought to make amends against the neglect of Natural Rights of human beings especially of the Shudras and Ati Shudras over the past centuries. It sought to restore their rights and also to take remedial action for their misery. In fact it insisted that the members should worship only the creator and honour the pure rights that have been given by the creator to all human beings by rejecting the belief that some men are born inferior. Each member is also required to give education to his children, so that they may understand their rights. Further the Samaj insisted that education especially English education is essential. Education played vital role not only in providing occupational skills but also for the intellectual emancipation of the low castes. Educational propaganda figured prominently in the agenda of action plan of Satyashodhak Samaj. Phule proposed the programme and appealed to the Samaj to worship the supreme God (creator) and avoid the role of the Brahman priest for performing the socio-religious ceremonies thereby dispensing with the hegemonic ideology of the Brahmans and establishing the Shudras and Ati-Shudras as a new moral community.<sup>5</sup>

Membership of Satyashodhak Samaj was open to all castes, sects and religious groups. Anyone who accepted its ideology and acted accordingly by taking an oath could be a member of Satyashodhak Samaj. The ideology of the Samaj attracted members irrespective of caste and religion including Brahmans and Muslims.<sup>6</sup> In this context Rosalind O. Hanlon has pointed out that about 700 families from Kunbi, Mali, potter, Carpenter and other Shudras launched a movement to make themselves independent in religious matters from Brahmans. These families refused to call Brahmans to perform the ceremonies, which was customary, and were giving to their own caste fellows, the food, which would otherwise have been offered to the priest.<sup>7</sup>

It has been observed that in the first year of the existence of the Satyashodhak Samaj 114 members out of 225 from different castes, religion and professions, i.e., lawyers, merchants, peasants, agricultural labourers, Malis, Rajputs, untouchables, Muslims, Brahmans, and government officials participated in the Satyashodhak Samaj. Non-Brahman castes were predominant, and Malis were the leading members and were financial supporters of it. Further some well-to-do Marathi and Telugu Mali families who were engaged as contractors came forward to support the activities of the Samaj.<sup>8</sup> Phule, Krishnarao Bhalenkar, Narayan Lokhande, Gyanoba Sasane, Ramayya Ayyavaru, Rajanna, Lingu, were the leading figures of the Samaj who belonged to the Mali caste.

Between 1873 and 1890 a large number of rural masses near Pune and Bombay were attracted towards the activities of Samaj. The growth of the Samaj was as follows: membership of Satyashodhak Samaj was 225, 232 and 316 in 1874, 1875 and 1876 respectively.<sup>9</sup> On the eve of the second Annual Conference held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1875, Phule handed over his responsibility as the President of Satyashodhak Samaj to Dr. Vishram Ghole, but Dr Ghole could not hold this position for more than two years.<sup>10</sup>



To spread the ideology of Satyashodhak Samaj, Krishnarao Bhalekar started the newspaper viz Deenabandhu in 1877, which Phule opposed in the beginning because he felt that the ignorant and illiterate Shudra and Anti-Shudra masses were not in a position to purchase a newspaper and read it. Bhalekar edited and published the Deenabandhu for three years from 1877 to 1880. After that Narayana Lokhande continued to edit this newspaper in Bombay upto 1897.<sup>11</sup>

Among the leaders of the Samaj there was a considerable division of labour. Phule held the intellectual leadership. Bhalekar, Ghole Uravane, Nagarkar, Ganapatyao patil, Nawalkar were involved in propagating ideals of Samaj in Pune and nearby villages. Narayana Lokhande and Kalekar had spread the work of Satyashodhak Samaj among the industrial workers, vegetable sellers and other backward castes as well as uneducated sections of the population of Bombay. Gopalbuva Valangkar, a Mahar by caste, was a good public speaker and writer, Valangkar was involved in mobilizing untouchable castes and Phule helped him in this work.<sup>12</sup>

From its inception, the Samaj devoted a very large part of its energy to the proselytisation of the lower caste communities in Pune and the surrounding villages. Members toured the areas addressing the masses and distributing tracts, giving 'Upadesh' or advice. The first report of the Samaj praised the efforts of Krishnarao Bhalekar, Revaji Sirole and others of the village of Bhamburade. Not only have they joined themselves in them. Satyashodhak Samaj established branches in the villages and with the help of poetry and music. Similarly in village Hadapsar many had become members.

The ideological opposition and rejection of Brahmin, elite culture was advocated in Phule's writings which were published by his colleagues. Phule's Gulamgiri Shetekaryancha -Asud, Tukaram Tatya Panduales'; Hitubhed viveksar, Baba Padmaji's Jotibhed Nirnay, Dodaba Misal's Jitibhedavar Sambhasham is also important for understanding their opposition to the Brahmans who had advocated their selfish interests. The opposition at the ideological level had to be expressed in terms of action plan. Such type of action was promoted by Satyashodhak Samaj in its early phase:

1. To oppose the role of priest as middleman and as exploiter between man and God in religious rituals and ceremonies. The Samaj also insisted on simple and inexpensive marriages, opposed child marriages, supported widow remarriages and inter-caste marriages. Although the frequency of such type of action was very low in the earlier phase but this started a new and innovative form of opposition.
2. The Satyashodhak Samaj opposed the exploitation of the peasant masses by 'Shetjis' (moneylenders) and 'Bhatjis' (Brahman Priests). Phule in this Shetekaryancha Asud (Cultivators' Whipcord) elaborated upon how the Shetjis and Bhatjis joined hands with each other to exploit the peasant masses.



One of the important programmes of the Satyashodhak Samaj was to ceremonially perform religious rites, marriage functions or housewarming ceremonies without the assistance of Brahman priests. Vanku Belasis Kalevar used to give Dakshana to Brahmans on the eve of 'Ganapathi Utsava' which is very popular in Maharashtra. After becoming a member of the Satyashodhak Samaj he stopped giving Dhakshana to the Brahmans and diverted the same to handicapped and poor people. In the same manner Sri Jaya Yellappa Lingu who used to offer the 'Marathi Bojanam' to the Brahmans on the eve of Divali festival. But when he became a member of the Samaj he stopped this practice and diverted the expenditure of that meal to students who were the sons and daughters of members of the Samaj and those who had secured highest marks in matriculation examination were given gold medals.<sup>13</sup>

It was not only the non-Brahmans but the Brahmans too benefited from the philosophy and efforts of phule. For instance when Phule addressed and appealed to Nais (Barbers) that they should not participate in the ritual of removing the hairs of a woman who had lost her husband. For such women phule opened a widow home for upper caste women in the Pune. Not only this but all the social evils which were practiced by Brahmans were condemned by Phule<sup>16</sup>. One of the important programmes of the Satyashodhak Samaj was opposing the presence of Brahmans on the eve of marriage functions, and house warming ceremonies. Balaji Usage Patil performed his sons's wedding without a Brahman priest in accordance with the rules of the Satyashodhak Samaj in Junnar village. The Brahman priests did not recognize the marriage and declared it invalid since a Brahman priest was not present. In the village of Otur, in Pune district, a meeting of Brahmans from surrounding villages was held. They passed a resolution to the effect that performing a marriage without a Brahman priest impinged on their rights; hence they filed a caste against him. Although the verdict went against Patil in the lower court, but where as in higher court ruled in favour of Patil<sup>14</sup>.

Phule wrote a long account about the wedding of a friend from Pune. Phule's young friend, Gyanoba Sasane, and then aged about 22 years who joined Samaj was influenced by Phule's philosophy and wished to marry kasibai, aged 14 years, daughter of Narayana Rao Vithoba Shinde of Parvati Village near Pune, without a Brahman priest. But the parents and elders of the Hadapsar (the village to which Sasane belonged) resisted and insisted on a traditional wedding. Sasane did not accept the advice of his parents and the elders of the village. However, some of the conservatives of the Mali caste came to Sasane's village of Hadapsar and roused some of the villagers against this proposed assault upon their ancestral religion. They gathered outside Sasane's house in the night shouting threats and abuse. Sasane was greatly shaken by this, and went to phule to tell that he had changed his mind. Phule urged him to take courage and assured him that they were living under the protection of British justice. With this Sasane returned to his village with courage. The opposition within the Mali caste continued. These opponents employed agents to visit Mali families of Hadapsar village to warn them that if they joined the Samaj



they would not be able to continue in the Mali caste. When Phule realized the extent of the opposition, he wrote to a fellow Satyashodhak Rajana Lingu, a Telugu Mali and a well-known Pune lawyer. Lingu persuaded Gangaram Bhau Mhaske a prominent public figure in Pune, and a well-wisher of the Samaj to arrange police protection for Sasane. The marriage went ahead according to plan without Brahman priest. As a gesture of protest against this supposed violation of Hindu beliefs the conservative members of the Mali caste arranged a marriage of a two-year-old girl at that time.<sup>15</sup>

The Satyashodhak Samaj continued to perform marriages without engaging Brahman priests. Ganjas Bapu Patil of Talwane village in Junner Taluk performed a marriage in his house without Brahman priest. A Barber's wedding was similarly performed, in Talegaon village. For this the Barber family was socially boycotted by the Brahmans of the village. The Barber went to Phule and explained the situation. Then Phule advised the Barber to boycott serving them and the Barber did the same, which created a rift between the Barber and the Brahman community.<sup>16</sup>

In 1885 peasants in Junner district agitated against the Brahman landlords and moneylenders demanding to reduce the rate of interest and 'Kowl' of land.<sup>17</sup> To settle this problem Phule took the lead to discuss it with Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad, government officials and also with the local landlords.

On the other hand Phule cultivated relations with the British Government hoping to seek some benefits from it for the shudras and Ati-Shudras. He felt that only under British rule did the Shudras and ati-shudras get some chances for upliftment in terms of education and employment in British Government. He was aware of the fact that the British would have to quit one day therefore wanted to speed up the process of social liberation of Shudras and Ati-Shudras.

Phule glorified the native tradition by providing myths and symbols such as God Khandoba, King Bali, Chatrapati Shivaji, who were considered as protectors of Shudras' interests. Further Phule glorified the ancient past with at least two intentions: first, he wanted to integrate the downtrodden castes by providing a common identity based on common practices, beliefs and symbols; secondly, Phule argued that Shudras and Ati-Shudras of the present day were displaced and deprived descendants of the kshatriyas. In tracing Kshatriya ancestry for Shudras and Ati-Shudras; Phule was aiming to increase the potential and heighten social aspirations of the Shudras. It was strategic step to boost their confidence and to reduce their sense of backwardness.

In its constructive action plan for the education of women of Shudras and Ati-Shudras, the Samaj attempted to open new schools for the lower caste people. Providing scholarships to Shudra students was another attempt to encourage their education. Phule and Bhalekar also emphasized free and compulsory primary education for all. In support of this Phule submitted a memorandum to the Hunter Commission in 1882 criticising the existing system, which did not provide education for all.<sup>18</sup>



Along with providing educational facilities the Satyashodhak Samaj urged for a constructive action plan by the Government to improve the agriculture sector for more production in form of construction of tanks, bunds and dams, specific programmes for animal breeding special education to peasants regarding new techniques of agriculture etc. They also opposed 'trickle down process' of development.<sup>19</sup>

In the same period Phule himself proved as an efficient and successful contractor in Pune. After assessing the successful execution of contracts, the Bombay government allotted contracts to construct the Khadakavasala dam, the Yeravada Bridge and the tunnel at Kantar Ghat on the Pune-Satara road. Phule employed hundreds of labourers in these projects which turned out to be extremely profitable. This was an opportunity to demonstrate his concern for the caste people. Phule employed Gyanoba Sasane as a supervisor to look after the labourers at Khadakavasala and Yeravada. He opened a night school at labour camps which was attended by not less than 2,000 workers. When the projects were completed, he gave a feast to all the labourers where Sasane addressed the labourers and stated that offering the feast to toiling labour is a much greater virtue than to give a feast to Brahmans. Sasane also described how during the great famine of 1877, when Phule was carrying out work of mining for stone at Golhe, he and other Mali contractors opened a famine relief camp for children, the sick and disabled at Dhanakavadi.<sup>20</sup>

From 1882, Phule and his colleagues attempted to extend the activities of the Satyashodhak Samaj to the rural areas in the Pune, Ahmednagar, and Thane Collectorates and beyond. This move of Phule brought the polemicist into a more sustained and direct contact with the communities of Kunbi cultivators. The Satyashodhak Samaj activities continued till 1890. After the death of Phule the second generation of Satyashodhaks, viz Bhaskar Rao Jadhav, Annasahed Lathe, Mukundra Patil, nana Patil, Sripatrao Shinde, Vitthal, Ramaji Shinde, Madhavarao Bagal, Bhaurao Patil were some leaders who carried on the activities of Satyashodhak Samaj in the rural areas of Maharashtra. All these leaders took the initiative in reorganizing the movement. They widened the area of the movement in their respective districts and mobilised the masses by a various means.<sup>21</sup>

Chatrapathi Shahu gave an effective boost to the Satyashodhak movement through both financial and ideological encouragement. His policies and programmes all contributed, directly or indirectly, to foster the movement. He encouraged the opening of branches of the Samaj in Kolhapur state<sup>22</sup>. Shahu's influence over the Kolhapur Satyashodhak Samaj was so prominent that it used to be known as Shahu Satyashodhak Samaj. In the initial stages Satyashodhak activities in Kolhapur were centered on arranging religious ceremonies without the help of Brahman priests, 200 marriages and many other such ceremonies were reported in 1912 and 266 marriages in 1913. In the next year, i.e., in 1914, the number of such marriages increased to 299<sup>23</sup>. Shahu also initiated the policy of promoting non-Brahmans in the state administration by reserving 50% of posts in the administration. Shahu established twenty hostels for the Shudras and Ati Shudras between 1897 to 1927.<sup>24</sup>



The difference between the Satyashodak Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj or between the Brahmo Samaj and Satyashodhak Samaj is worth considering. It shows why Jotirao, the peasant philosopher felt the necessity for an independent institution. The Arya Samaj was not born until 1875. Both the Prarthana Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj believed in theism. Ram Mohan Roy started with Brahmo the Prarthana Samaj with 'prayer', Jotirao with Truth, and later Dayananda with 'Arya'. These twins Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj believed in social evolution whereas the Satyashodhak Samaj wanted a social revolution whereas the Satyashodhak Samaj wanted a social revolution. However, leaders of the Prarthana Samaj could not come into contact with the masses.

The Satyashodhak Samaj philosopher was a simple and honest peasant. The Satya Shodhak believed social action. Their language was the language of the people; their places of propaganda were the corn-gathering places. The dress of the preacher of the Satyashodhak Samaj consisted of a blanket, a turban and a dhoti, and he had a drum in his hand. He referred to the debts, to injunctions and rites the peasants suffered from, and told them how the little money they had was drained away by the cunning and selfish Brahmin priests. He urged them to send their children to schools so that they might learn about law, about religion, and about god.<sup>25</sup>

The institutions founded by Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade and Bhandarkar, and later by Dayanand Saraswati, catered only to the needs of the upper castes and towards reform within the hierarchical religious fold. Whereas Jotirao's institutions struggled for bringing in social equality. Therefore, Satyashodhak Samaj was infact the first institution to launch a social movement and initiate reforms in modern India.

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# IMPACT OF CANAL IRRIGATION ON THE AGRARIAN STRUCTURE OF COASTAL ANDHRA DURING 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

L. VIDYASAGAR REDDY

Indian Agricultural sector that employs directly 68% of its population and provides livelihood for another 15% indirectly, contributes about 38% of gross national income<sup>1</sup>; but agricultural sector suffers from vagaries of monsoons even after forty years of Independence. One of the reasons is poor planning and management of our water resources. Even though Andhra Pradesh is endowed with mighty perennial rivers like Godavri, Krishna, Pennar and Thungabhadra, still our irrigated area is not more than 36% of net cropped acreage<sup>2</sup>. There are only a few studies that investigated into the linkages between the volume of the water flowing in the rivers, the suitable soils and the proper scientific methods of management<sup>3</sup>.

The earliest attempts during the last two centuries were made by famous hydraulic engineers like Arthur Thomas Cotton, Sir F.C.Cotton, Sir H.C.Cotton, Baird Smith, Michael Topping, Charles Orr and experts like V. Veerannah; and it culminated in the construction of dams and barrages across Godavari, Krishna, Pennar, Thungabhadra, Kaveri and Coleroon. But the area actually irrigated under these gigantic projects fell short of the potential acreage planned and also the irrigable area as per the estimates due to several factors including wrong designs, porous canals, and unsuitable command area like black cotton soils, and also the indolent administrative staff, which was often indifferent to the problem of the people.

It is a time consuming process to study in detail all these problems and therefore we selected an important area namely the effects of canal irrigation on agricultural production and agrarian relations in the Coastal Andhra region between 1847 and 1900. However, here and there we allow ourselves to stretch into the related areas.

The Coastal Andhra region which at present (1990) extends from Srikakulam district in the north to Nellore district in the south and divided into nine districts, comprised of almost the same area during the period of our study, i.e., 1846-1900, but was divided into only five districts of Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, Krishna (Guntur upto 1860), and Nellore. Including feudatories it comprised an area of 32<sup>1/2</sup> million acres of nearly 50 thousand sq.miles<sup>4</sup>.

No exact data are available about the land use pattern in this region for pre-1836 period. However, we can make use of some available statistics like occasional reports and the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue for a few details. As per James Grant, 1/5<sup>th</sup> of total area was under plough in 1784, 2/5<sup>th</sup> was pastures and the remainder i.e., another 2/5<sup>th</sup> was under forest<sup>5</sup>. Of course, these calculations were about Northern Circars only and Nellore district was not much different. Later,



in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there is evidence that some of the forests were encroached for cultivation while large tracts of cultivated land was left either fallow or pastures due mainly to the increased tax burden imposed by the East India Company Government. By 1840, after the dreaded Guntur famine of 1833, the process of conversion of cultivated lands into pastures got speeded up. Large number of water sources including tanks, canals and wells were silted up and the agricultural production, both per capital and per acre, declined considerably. The area and production of paddy and other irrigated crops decreased considerably during this period.

In these circumstances the British East India Company Government had no alternative except to improve the irrigation facilities to protect the interests of this area. There was risk of losing a large part of the land revenue, which was the principle source of their state income. Consequently, the Company authorities called for expert hydraulic engineers from Great Britain and used their services for the investigation and construction of irrigation dams across the rivers of Godavari, Krishna and Penna of this region. Sir Arthur Cotton, his brother Hugh Cotton and other engineers of the East India Company after hard efforts, could provide Irrigation to lakhs of acres and helped for the economic growth and prosperity of the people of this region.

The preliminary investigations for the Godavari anicut were carried on during the by last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Michael Topping. The final investigations were conducted in 1844 by Major cotton to irrigate about more than a lakh acres, even though later it was extended. The original estimate was Rs.4 lakhs 75 thousand five hundred and seventy two:

Anicut	388,005
Five Locks	18,419
Two Head sluices	13,148
Excavation	14,000
Superintendence	12,000
Contingencies	<u>30,000</u>
	<u>4,75,572</u>

Source: Henry Morris: Godavari District Manual, London, 1878.

It was estimated in the preliminary reports that an area of 81 thousand 600 acres would be irrigated in the District of Rajahmundry (Godavari) yielding a gross produce of the value of 3 million 20 thousand rupees per annum with a land revenue of one million five hundred ten rupees per year. Major Cotton calculated that the productive capacity of the lands would be more than doubled after a decade of irrigation from the canals with small amounts to be spent on their maintenance. Efforts were made to keet the canals flow on high ground so as to irrigate the maximum possible area.



Some of the objectives of anicuts as mentioned by Sir Arthur Cotton in 1845 are important. Firstly, it was proposed to construct major anicuts across the three rivers, which ultimately irrigated more than twenty lakhs acres. Secondly, to effect changes in the cropping pattern from extensive to intensive and from food grain orientation to the growth of commercial crops. Thirdly, to introduce internal canal transport and finally to export agricultural raw materials from these deltas to Madras city and England.

The first proposals for damming River Krishna were made in 1792-93 but like Godavari it was given up for the time being. But major Arthur Cotton after his Godavari anicut received the proposals in 1851 and the Court of Directors of East India Company sanctioned Rs.15<sup>12</sup> lakhs for the construction of the anicut at Bezawada and the dependent works. The construction of these works was assisted by an expert engineer, namely Captain Orr. At the same time, according to Cotton's plans, an anicut was thrown cross the river Pennar near Nellore to irrigate an area of about 50 thousand acres, both directly and indirectly by feeding tanks with the flood waters. Thus by 1860 the combined area irrigated under these three anicuts, i.e. Godavari at Rajmundry, Krishna at Bezawada, Pennar at Nellore was about 3 lakhs of acres and it was increased in 1890-91 to about 9 lakhs acres with all additions that were made in this period of 30 years.

Statement: Area irrigated under Government canals in the three deltas in 1890-91

District	Area in Acres
Godavari	5,27,729
Krishna	3,27,333
Nellore	57,032
Total	9,12,094

Source: British India Agricultural Statistics, op.cit.

It should be noted that the area irrigated under Government canals other than the anicut canals were only a few thousand in all these three districts.

## II

### IMPACT OF THE CANAL IRRIGATION

It is very difficult to specify the overall effects of the anicuts, is also equally difficult to separate the specific effects of the anicuts from those of improving technology and changing institutions. However, we shall try to quantify the direct effects on area and production of the wet crops and also point out to the changing agrarian relations so far as they differed from those prevailing in non-anicut areas.

The first effect was on the increased area irrigated under the Government canals. The irrigated area increased from 506000 acres in 1852-53 to 775000 in



1870-71, to 822000 in 1880-81 and to 984000 in 1889-90. Most of this rise was at the cost of the dry crops, which in turn encroached into the pastures and forests.

Secondly changes in the cropping pattern from the predominantly dry to the predominantly wet crops. Major changes are evident between 1870-71; and 1894-95. Area under rice and other irrigated crops including fruit garden included enormously while area under dry food crops and non-food crops too decreased in all the three districts during this period. Of course, there is a rise in the total gross cropped area in all the three districts mainly due to the shortening of the fallows and encroachment into the forests.

The combined effect of these two changes, namely increased area irrigated and a change in the cropping pattern in favour of the wet crops like paddy and sugarcane brought in their turn high margins of marketed surplus of both food and non-food crops. This led to the changes in the technology and ultimately the agrarian relations evolved in the post-anicut era were entirely different from those of the pre-anicut period.

### **Agrarian Relations**

The important changes that took place in agrarian relations fall into: 1) Land markets, 2) Lease markets, 3) Credit markets and 4) Labour markets. Most of them are inter-related and their specific combinations led to a number of minor effects. We shall discuss here only the main points for which data are available from the Board of Revenue proceedings.

The pace of land transactions in these three deltas increased considerably after 1850. Prior to the anicuts there were very few transactions. When an enquiry was made in 1820's into the pace and frequency of the land transactions the District Collectors of Godavari, Krishna and Nellore reported very few commercial transactions. Most of the transactions were the estates sold and purchased by tax farmers and other feudal interests, and few actual cultivators were involved in these transactions. The prices varied with the amount of land revenue and nature of the holding. The common price of lands grown with paddy ranged from 5 to 8 years while those of dry lands from one to five years of net income<sup>6</sup>. The conditions of land market in these districts were not much different from those of Rayalaseema districts or Coimbatore district that got similar black soils.

The value of land increased enormously between 1845 and 1900 in these three deltas. For example, the price of paddy growing land that ranged from Rs.50/- to Rs.80/- before 1823 increased to Rs.300/- to Rs.500/- an acre depending upon the duration of the availability of canal waters in Krishna district. The price range was still higher in the districts of Nellore and Godavari as seen from the Settlement Reports. This implies that the land market became active due to the anicut.

Tenancy during the pre-anicut period was mostly of sharing-crop type. It might have been due to the high degree of risk involved in the agricultural production<sup>7</sup>.



But with the on set of anicut irrigation, share cropping gave place to fixed tenancy due to the low risk or no risk involved in the production of paddy and other wet crops. The change in the nature of tenancy brought in its train many other changes, which we shall discuss under other appropriate.

The volume of credit expanded due mainly to the increased quantity of production and especially the marketable surplus. Not only the cost of inputs increased with intensive methods of production, but also the capacity of the farmers to invest in agro-based industries, and other arts and crafts increased. The credit needs were met by the businessmen, traders and big landlords during the pre-anicut period. Due to the increased surplus, the direction of the credit flow hanged to the opposite after 1850, i.e., from tenants to the landlords. This helped the smooth transfer of lands from the landlords to the actual cultivators through the acceptable means of market<sup>8</sup>.

There were major changes in the labour market too. Most of the permanent farm servants of the pre-anicut period were replaced by the seasonal labourers in the early years of the irrigation, say, 1870's. Afterwards, the casual labour market grew fast with the onset of commercialization of agriculture. Even though per capital employment increased fast resulting in rising wage rates up to the Great Madras Famine of 1876-78, there was stabilization and stagnation in the employment situation in 1880's and there was a conspicuous decline in the economic position of the agrarian classes during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Some generalizations can be made from the foregoing analysis. As a result of the anicuts agricultural production increased and also revenue to the government. The famines were banished and agriculture was commercialized. Consequently, the gap between the rich and poor in the rural tracts of these deltas increased considerably.

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## STATUS OF HINDUS UNDER QUTB SHAHI'S OF GOLCONDA

SYED. AYUB ALI

The soil of Deccan has nourished remarkable rulers who cherished high values of life and kept up the torch of secularism burning in their dominions during the Medieval period. These rulers are known as the symbols of Hindu-Muslim unity, and this kind of unity has been prevailing in Deccan during the Medieval period. In addition to this, the region has been cradle of peace and harmony under various rulers of the Medieval times. The Cultural floresence touched to bizzzy highs at various points of time. This synthesis could be noticed vividly during the times of Vijayanagar, the Bahamanis and the successive states viz Adil Shahis and Qutb shahis of Golconda period.

An attempt is made in this paper to highlight the continuity of the cultural co-existence in the society under the rulers of Qutb Shahis, despite the change in the political order. As a result it was found that there was tacit understanding between the rulers and the ruled. Further this paper locates the mutual dependence of the ruling class and the ruled as they found it was beneficial to the both, for the rulers the support of the earlier indigenous ruling class was found essential for smooth running the State's administration. Similarly the local dominant groups felt that their interests were taken care of by their support to the new rulers and found it advantageous to extend the support rather to resist because they were recognized for higher position in military & civil departments.

Lastly this paper explore the secular practices followed during the Qutb Shahi period such as, the endowment grants given by the rulers to the temples, appointment of non Muslims in the bureaucracy and the local Telugu population participating in the Maharam ceremonies etc.

The Qutb Shahis of Golconda ruled the eastern part of the Deccan for nearly two centuries i.e. from 1518-1687 AD. The geographical extent of this kingdom exceeds the present state of Andhra Pradesh, where majority constitutes the Telugu speaking people. After the Kakatiyas the Telugu speaking people enjoyed political Unity for the second time under these Sultans. The Qutb Shahi period saw a complete understanding between the two section of the people viz., the Muslims and the Hindus. A unique and interesting feature of the Qutb Shahi rule is that their attitude towards local people was based on tolerance. Though their religion and language are alien, they never neglected the native language, native customs, nor they tried to impose their customs on local people. On the other hand they observed many a local customs and traditions in their own life style. Qutb Shahi rulers were sympathetic towards Andhra culture and freely incorporated may of its elements into their composite cultural pattern. They identified themselves with the country they lived in, and they imbibed the local spirit and assimilated the local traditions



and concepts. They never regarded as an alien conquerors superior to the people over whom they had sway. For nearly two centuries, the Qutb Shahis maintained peace, security and economic prosperity of the kingdom. This success of the sultans was not much because of the military force towards the subjects but because of the benevolent rule they have extended.

The society during the Qutub Shahi period was a combination of people of different origins, races, religions and culture. The Golconda's region which is technically called as Tilang andhra by Persian chroniclers, attracted migrant people from different countries such as Persia, Arabia and Europe. Portugal, Dutch, England and France. Immigrants kept on increasing because of the prosperity of Golconda kingdom. Tarikh-i-Qutub shahi confirms that, there were continuous flow of people from Turkistan, Kurasan and Arabia and other adjacent lands into the Golconda kingdom<sup>1</sup>. The immigrants who came down to Deccan from different parts not only carried different cultures but also of different sects like Shias and Sunnis, like wise, the local population were also divided into casts, tribes etc. It was in this diversified society the Qutub Shahi Sultans maintained complete harmony and social amity between the two great sections of the population.

Almost all the kings of the Qutb Shahi dynasty were highly learned and cultured, during this period Telugu language ranked high in the estimate and they extended their patronage to this language and evinced great interest in the development of Telugu literature, from the beginning to the end of their rule. With the reign of Ibrahim Qutub Shahi a new era of patronage of art and learning started. He rallied round him, a galaxy of erudite scholars and made the best of his time in their company. The author of Tarikh-i-Qutub Shahi says that, the learned accompanied him even when he was on his tour. He was the first monarch to hail the glory of Telugu language. Ibrahim showered monetary gifts and pensions to Telugu poets and even gave some of them jagirs in perpetuity Kandukuri Rudra Kavi was granted a village Chintala Palem, near his home village, Kandukur in the Nellore District. Malla Reddy went out of his way to compose poems on Ibrahim as Malkibha Ramudu by Hindusing his name to Abhi rama or Raghu Rama. He was popularly known in Andhra as Mallikabhi Ramudu<sup>2</sup>.

The reign of Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah and Mohammad Qutb Shah were solely devoted to literary and cultural pursuits. Quli Qutb Shah was born to a Telugu lady Bhagirathi and he married Bhagamati, a Hindu girl. His love for Telugu region, language was no wonder that Telugu was the mother tongue to him. He might have been quite fluent in that language as Urdu collection of poetry was interspersed with the use of Telugu words in phrases and even more strange was the fact that his Urdu poems centre round local Hindu festivals and Hindu culture.

The Abdullah's reign carried the torch of Telugu language and literature burning, while it also saw the fusion of Muslim traditions into the very blossom of Telugu folklore and the part-adaptation of Telugu along with Persian as a language of Administration.



During the last ruler's time, a number of outstanding features emerged in the society with the popularity of Telugu in the Kingdom. As Persian became a cementing force between the Muslims and the Hindu elite, Telugu also stepped forward from the traditional Hindu fold to Muslim literature.

In addition to these, an interesting thing about the Qutb Shahi rule was the tradition of issuing bilingual official orders which had started during Ibrahim's reign. There was a bilingual farman inscribed on the bund of the tank at Pangal. The Telugu part of the inscription is much fuller, moreover, it was in the Telugu version only, that an interesting division is made of the extra-produce expected to be obtained consequent to the construction of the bund<sup>3</sup>. In the year 1551 A.D the year after his accession to the throne, Ibrahim Qutb Shah set his engineers to clear and renovate a large run-down Kakatiya irrigation work at Pangal. In so doing, the Qutub Shahi King made an appeal to some of the most deep rooted aspects of Telugu culture. In the bilingual inscription commemorating the work Ibrahim retained one part of the income from lands Irrigated by the complex for the royal treasury another portion for the cultivations, and the remainder for the support of Muslim holy Brahmins.

During the times of Abdullah Qutb Shah and Abdul Hussan Tanasha we come across some more bilingual farmans with a larger version in the Telugu than in Persian, leading to certain trilingual Telugu Farman

Thus the Qutb Shahis brimmed over with zeal and fervour adorned Telugu language and literature and in this way their unstained and ungrudging eadeavours only equalled the status of Telugu to that of Urdu and Persian. It is an irrefutable fact that the Qutb Shahi Kings regarded Telugu region as their own home land and Telugu as next to their own tongue. As such they launched Vigorous and earnest efforts to serve the cause of this language and they encouraged Telugu pupils and poets. It is no exaggeration to say that the Qutb Shahi age was the golden age for Telugu language and literature while every other language was also nursed and nourished in the royal court.

Religious freedom was the distinct hall mark of the Qutub Shahi Kingdom. All classes and communities what ever be the religious affiliation, (Caste or creed) enjoyed full freedom of conscience and religious practices. There is no record of mass conversions of Hindus to Islam during the long reign of the Qutb Shahi history. Hindu temples and institutions were as liberally subsidized by the government as were the Muslim Mosques. Abul Hassan Tanasha endowed three villages, Bhadra challam, Palvancha and Shankergir Patti for the maintenance of the temple. Brahma Ramba Malleshwari was equally endowed by the king three villages Bhagavarm, cheruvuru and veeranapattanam for its maintenance. Farman of Abdul Hasan Tanasha bearing a royal seal and Telugu version addressed to the officials of the chandiparagana and Ramaraj Shankria, Governor of Karnataka regarding to grant of 50 Kochal in the three villages, for the maintenance of the temple of Sri Bharamara Malleshwar swami temple and it is also mentioned that a village called Malleshwar



swami puram should be laid out in the neighbourhood of the temple and its revenues should be utilized the upkeep of the said temple<sup>4</sup>. There is a popular and wide spread tradition wield under, tender sentiments connecting Tanashah to the temple of Bhadrachalam. Gopana alias Bhakta Ramadas a revenue Officer in Bhadrachalam region spent all the government dues on the construction of the temple of Rama. For the default he was imprisoned. It is said that Tanashah had a vision of Rama and Laxman in a dream and the next day they found his side bags of money where upon Sultan not only released Gopana but also started a tradition of sending mutyala Thalambralu or pearl Talambralu annually to Bhadrachalam on the day of Sri Rama Navami which was continued by Nizam of Hyderabad state and subsequently by the Government of Andhra Pradesh till this date.

There was a perfect understanding between the two sections of the people and each one respected the religious institutions of others. Muharum month was considered holy for Hindus and Muslims. This unity can be seen even today in the village where Allams are installed ceremoniously by non Muslims with great devotion. It reflects the glorious tradition of respect towards each others beliefs and institutions. Muslim shrines and saints are the main source of mental and spiritual solace for the members of the communities.

The Qutb Shahis did not show any discrimination in appointments to the public service on grounds of religion, or caste & creed. The Hindus and Muslims were equally eligible to all the posts starting from the lowest rank of clerk, to that of the highest post of prime minister. The Sultans of Golconda had opened the corridors for their subjects irrespective of caste, creed and religion, men of the calibre were given preference and assigned important Jobs, Merit was the criteria for all purposes. The Hindus and Muslims were equally eligible to all the posts starting from the lowest rank of clerk to that of the highest post of Prime Minister. The instance of Rama Raju, under Sultan Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk, Jagadev Rao under Jamshid Quli, Murahari Rao alias Rai Rao under Ibrahim Qutb Shah and Akkanna and Madanna under Abul Hassan, these people of talent and ability under the enlightened rule of Qutb Shahi Sultans, could rise to the highest position next only to the King in the State.

The Hindus who formed the bulk of the population received magnanimous treatment from Sultans of Golconda. The nobility of the kingdom which exercised considerable influence on the government was made up of the Naikwaris of the hereditary Hindu Zamindars. They formed an important part of the Qutb Shahi administration and held positions of trust and responsibility from the beginning of the Qutb Shahi kingdom.

Contemporary records confirm that the Nayakas were the important indigenous social group to participate in the central political system of both civil and military organisations. Civil department managed more or less exclusively by the Hindus. These people from the humble clerkship in the provincial daftar to the



highest ministership of the State. There was no post too low for them to disregard or too high to aspire after.

A conquest state established and ruled by an alien minority needed military power supported by adequate revenue to service. But acceptance of the regime and active co-operation by the members of the most powerful groups in local society were also vital. The Qutb Shahis did manage to persuade a sizeable number of Telugu people. As in previous regimes brahmin clerks and accountants appear to have filled most of the lower ranking positions in the Golconda central administration. Brahmins were especially strong in the Telugu branch of the control secretariat which issued orders and edicts in the indigenous language. They also practiced their traditional skills in the central fiscal office. Brahmins frequently rose to the highest positions in these state departments. More so there strength can be seen in its control of the revenue system in every type of tax collection the agents who actually made the collection were virtually all Brahmins. Brahmins also served as ubiquitous agents (vakils) for virtually all agents men, each Muslim noble or Hindu, Armenian or European merchants. In this capacity Brahmins often achieved substantial name and fame in the power structure<sup>5</sup>.

Apart from Brahmin officials, Telugu Nayakas were the other important indigenous social group to participate in the central political system. These warriors maintained a recognized existence in the eyes of the state throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Thus the nobles Nayakavrian in residence at the Qutub Shahi court appear to have been courtiers at times, but most important function was military. Contemporary sources confirm that the Nayakas also retained their earlier function as hereditary garrison troops. As they had in the pre-Golconda period. Telugu Nayakas manned the great fortresses of the eastern Deccan.

The Civil and Military annals of the Qutb Shahi period mentions the name of several illustrious, able and daring generals. Enkoji and Hanna Nayaka were the two celebrated generals of Sultan Quli, played important and pivotal role in the military conquest in Telangana region during the early period of the Qutb Shahi Kingdom. Jamshi Quli (1543-1550 A.D) honoured Gana Nayaka with the title of Jagadev Rao as reward for his daring and splendid military exploits in the service of the Monarch against Barid Shah which was recorded in the contemporary records.

Ibrahim Qutb Shah's reign (1550-1580 AD) was set on stable foundation by the efforts of Rai Rao, Enkoji, Jaga Deva Rao and Murahari Rao. During his period only Jagadev Rao and Murahari Rao were made the commanders of 2000 and 1000 cavallary respectively as a reward to the yeoman service rendered by them. Aseer Rao the commander in-chief of the sultan Mohammed Quli Qutb shah (1580-1612, AD) served the kingdom with utmost sincerity. In addition to these officers, Dharma Rao, Jagapathi Rao, Sri Rao, Babji Bhole Rao, Mukunda Rao, Hari chand. Ramachander and Krishna Rao were the trusted and able Hindu officers of sultans Mohd.Quli Qutb Shah. Ambaji Rao and Narayan Rao were able trusted



officers and military generals of Abdullah Qutb Shah(1627-1672 A.D). Qutb Shahi the period found it advantageous to support the region. Links between the locality dominant non-muslim groups and the centre grew stronger. Thus it can be presumed the Nayakas had long been part of the court scene in the capital. Local aristocracy's fortunes and prospects lay in royal favour, not in resistance and revolt.

In addition to the above the Hindus had equal opportunity to compete with others in gainful economic pursuits. To illustrate these, it can be mentioned that the paraganas and Mahals were auctioned annually. It was usually the Hindus who were the successful bidders<sup>8</sup>, same as the case with regard to the ports. The regional aristocracy was drawn from four major castes: Razus, Valamas, Kammas, and Kapus (Reddies). Members of these castes, played an important role in the socio-economic and political system of the eastern Deccan. Depending on local conditions, either Razus, Valamas, Kammas, or Reddies formed the dominant land-controlling stratum in every village. On the next upward level they functioned as local chief and rajas of varying importance. By their grip on land and on surplus agricultural production, these warrior/cultivators wielded immense political, economic, and military power in the countryside. In order to tap agricultural production effectively the Qutub Shahs had either to remove these groups or come to terms with them. But the Qutb Shahs began to build a new system with the co-operation of the Telugu warrior, aristocracy.

Thus the Sultans of Golconda could get the support of the local aristocracy because, they did not disturb or interfere in their local economic, Social and religious matters. During the Qutb Shah period a memorable chapter in the history of Medieval Andhra started towards a unique gesture of good will between the two sections of the people.

This goes to prove that there was no restriction for the Hindus to prosper economically and thus have a say in the administrative machinery. All sections of the society were involved equally in the process of works and who ultimately glorified the regime of Golconda rulers. During Qutb Shahi period Hindu officers discharged their duties as faithfully as Muslims they never wavered in their loyalty even in the most trying circumstance, when they were called upon to face the Hindu power.

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\*Analysing the published edicts (faramans) of Abul Hassan, H.K.Sharwani concluded that these display a clear tendency towards some kind of favour to high Hindu Officials and gentry and by implication marked absence of royal patronage for Muslim official Zamindars.



# ILLARIKAM<sup>1</sup> MARRIAGES AMONG BONDED LABOUR IN RURAL TELANGANA – A STUDY

Dr. THALLAPALLY MANOHAR

The Telangana Armed Struggle of erstwhile Hyderabad state waged against the autocratic rule of Mir Osman Ali Khan for both i.e., land problem and liberations from the vetti<sup>2</sup> were the crucial issues. The Ayagar<sup>3</sup> system in Telangana introduced during the reign of the Kakatiyas was a little changed by the Qutub-Shahi rulers to be evolved as Inamdari system during the rule of Asaf-Jahis. Some measure of land was provided to artisans and serving castes to strengthen further the self sufficient village system. When the land became a commodity, in light of changes introduced by Sir Salarjung-I former revenue collectors became owners of the huge lands in Telangana and exercised a good bit of power. Taking advantage of this the land lords build up pressure on artisan and servicing castes, and started extracting of free labour reached its worst stage at the fag end of Asaf-Jahi rule, which led to rise of Telangana Armed Struggle. People fought for land and also for liberation from the vetti. The Inam<sup>4</sup> lands thus given confirmed the bonded labour. People who rendered free Service called vetti madiga in Telangana<sup>5</sup> and same has been called with different names in different parts of India<sup>6</sup>. In fact the castes under the Ayagar system such as: Reddy, Karanam (Patwari)<sup>7</sup>, Priest, Washerman, Blacksmith, Potter, Carpenter, Barber and Madigas to serve the government machinery compulsorily during Qutub-Shahi and Asaf-Jahis rule. But, during the reign of the last Nizam, Reddy and Karanam rose to the status of government officers and started wielding a supervisory power over the rest of the artisan and servicing caste. Not only did they extract free labour, this forced them to render extracting labour by the government officers also. In order to reduce the burden of the bonded labour, the artisans and servicing castes adopted a method that getting bridegroom from same village or from other neighboring villages to his daughter's marriage known as illarikam in which son-in-law spouse to reside in laws home only, sharing in Inam and patta<sup>8</sup> lands as well as sharing vetti or free labour to the land lords and government officials, thus lessening the burden of the in-laws. This paper aims at the investigation of rural Telangana which adopted the illarikam system to reduce their part of the burden.

For the purpose of investigation I selected Waddepally village in Warangal district of Telangana. The village Waddepally has some specialty. The Nizam rulers divided Telangana into two administrative Subas<sup>9</sup>. Such as Warangal and Medak. The Suba office,<sup>10</sup> the residence of Subedar<sup>11</sup> and other government offices like Warangal Taluq office, Treasury,<sup>12</sup> Survey and Settlement Office, Travellers Bungalow,<sup>13</sup> the Police outpost<sup>14</sup>, the Musafir Kana<sup>15</sup> were also located in the outskirts of the waddepally village Pingili Venkat Rama Reddy, who belongs waddepally village was appointed as tax-farmer<sup>16</sup> to the same village<sup>17</sup> with the powers of Mali Patel<sup>18</sup> and Police Patel.<sup>19</sup> In a process of modernization of state he rose to the



status of Deputy Prime Minister during the regime of the last Nizam,<sup>20</sup> and got the Abkari-Mamla (Excise-tax) of Telangana region in the name of his brother viz., Pingali Ranga Reddy and thus secured all supervisory powers in the rural Telangana.<sup>21</sup> His younger brother Pingali Krishna Reddy was assigned the work of agriculture in Waddepally and the surrounding villages, having all got of power the Pingali family extracted forced service from the artisan and servicing castes for their own development. The details of inam lands assigned by the government of Nizam of Hyderabad to waddepally village stated below:

**Table-I**  
**DETAILS OF INAM LANDS IN WADDEPALLY VILLAGE**

Sl. No.	Inam Description	No. of Survey No.	No. of Inamdar	Extent of Acres <sup>32</sup> Guntas <sup>33</sup>
1.	Balotha Inam <sup>24</sup>	11 <sup>25</sup>	01	23-11
2.	Chowthai Inam <sup>26</sup>	12 <sup>27</sup>	06	08-39
3.	Setsindhi Inam <sup>28</sup>	04 <sup>29</sup>	03	05-14
4.	Neeradi Inam <sup>30</sup>	04 <sup>31</sup>	02	05-35
5.	Khairathi Inam <sup>32</sup>	07 <sup>33</sup>	04	18-19
6.	Deval Inam <sup>34</sup>	01 <sup>35</sup>	01	01-27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>63-25</b>

The above table reveals that 23 acres and 11 guntas were spread over into 11 survey numbers as Balotha Inam is recorded in the name of one Inamdars, land measuring 8 acres 39 guntas was spread over into 12 survey numbers as Chowthai Inam is recorded in the name of six Inamdars, land measuring 5 acres 14 guntas spread over into 4 survey numbers as endowed Setsindhi Inam is recorded in the name of 3 Inamdars; land measuring 5 acres 35 guntas were spread over into 4 survey numbers as Neeradi Inam is recorded in the name of 2 Inamdars; land measuring 18 acres 19 guntas were spread over into 7 survey numbers as Khairathi Inam is recorded in the name of 4 Inamdars and land measuring 1 acre 27 guntas spread over into 1 survey number as Deval Inam is recorded in the name of one Inamdar.

#### **Bonded Labour (vetti Chakiri) rendered to officials:**

As in every village in Telangana, there was a Chavadi<sup>36</sup> in the village which as called 'Mosopuri'. The people viewed it as an abode where unchecked cheating was perpetrated<sup>37</sup>. In fact, it is the corrupt form of Musafir Khana and is situated near the gadi<sup>38</sup> of the Pingili family. There is also a police Nakha (outpost) beside the gadi. Revenue officers who visited the village in connection of the government work and the police officials whose duty was to protect law and order used to stay at this place. So, the Madiga caste men had to keep vigil day and night. They had to fetch faggots from the forest as fire wood for the cooking of food for officers. If



dry firewood was not available, they had to gather it from their houses and supply, carry the Dhaftar (bundles of files) and other articles on their heads to the places where ever officers goes on his job<sup>39</sup>. The begaris had to clean the lavatories used by the officers and malish (grooming) their horses, sweep the village chavadi and police out post and sprinkle cow dung water. They should be available to the officers all the time and serve them. Washermen had to wash the clothes of officers who stayed at chavadi and put rangoli in the premises; get fowls by Madigas, supplied on rotation, kill them and prepare for the pudding. Village barbers had to shave and crop the officials and massage their bodies; fill the oil and light the lamps, and arrange their beds<sup>40</sup>. Carpenters had to supply cots and chairs. Blacksmiths had to make the link chain with iron to survey the lands, flag posts and other implements or take up repairs. Potters had to supply new pots, fill water in them and prepare food. Mudiraj, Kapu and Mala caste men of the village who were employed for Maskuri job had pass the instructions of the officers to the villages, should always be available to the officers to supervise the service of free labourers and help officers in collection of land tax.<sup>41</sup> Besides these artisan and service castes people, Komati (merchants) had to supply all provisions required in preparation of food. Pingili family who holded, Patwari and Patel positions used to invite officers to partake food, in accord to their needs. Since Pingili family happed to contractor of Abkari, they got supplied good toddy to the officers by their forced labourers with out giving any remuneration to toddy toppers. If any body died in accident in village, the veti madigas had to keep vigil around the clock until the panchanama was conducted; they had to bring out dead bodies from wells, tanks somewhere else<sup>42</sup>. The village Maskuris had to deliver the Rojnancha<sup>43</sup> and over situation in the village sent by the police patel to the government office; in the same line the patwari to gather information over the cultivation, its extent in each bit of survey numbers should send to revenue office to arrive the land tax figures; helps officers at the times of Jamabandi<sup>44</sup> and to decide over village taibandi<sup>45</sup>.

### **Bonded Labour (Vetti Chakiri) obligatorily rendered to Pingili Family:**

In turn, the Madiga families had to serve in the fields of Pingili family through out the year. Their work commenced from starting of ploughing the fields, continued to weeding and harvesting operations till the grain was filled in the granaries of the doras or the landlord of the village; had to plough in turn; get manures of their own cattle and spread into the fields of dora. Peel the hides of dead cattle, tan them and make footwear to the members of Dora's family and their seridars (servant leader), palers (servant) or jitagallu; had to prepare leather sheaths and ropes to their mota<sup>46</sup> wells. For this purpose, the hide peeled off the dead cattle was shared equally by Pingili family and Madigas. They had to keep vigil over their paddy fields, gardens, wells, cattle, sheds, grain store houses and also at the gadi. In the same way the women of Madiga families had to go to the cattle-sheds of the Dora, remove the dung, clean them up, make dung-cakes and then participate in agricultural activities along with other village women folk<sup>47</sup>.



The blacksmith had to fix the iron shares and drill teeth to the ploughs of Pingili family, make sickles, axes, pickaxes and crowbars, besides sharpening them. The carpenter had to supply agricultural implements like ploughs, drills and mota, besides the construction of cattle sheds for the Pingili family; make chairs, tables, cots etc. His work went on through out the year. Families of blacksmiths and carpenters spent all their time in serving the agricultural needs of Pingili family. They had; of course, small patta and Inam land holdings but hardly had any time to cultivate them<sup>48</sup>.

Potters had to cut vegetables, grind masala and prepare everything ready for cooking in Pingili house holds; fill the pots with water. Washermen had to wash the clothes of Pingili family; sweep the premises, spray dung water and then apply rangoli. Barbers had to shave and crop, besides, massaging the body of Dora and in the evening they had to light the lamps in the gadi; prepare beds to sleep; press the legs until doras went to sleep; barber women had to shoulder the responsibility of mid-wife at the time of delivery of dorasani<sup>49</sup> and keep vigil over them until delivery<sup>50</sup>.

Kapu, Mala and Mudiraj caste men who did the job of Neeradi should see that the lands of Pingili dora were supplied with enough water. Brahmins had to act as priests in all ceremonies connected with marriage or death or decide over the auspicious days to begin agricultural operations or to go on journey. The village Komatis should maintain (accounts of Dora's agricultural operations and transaction) book-keeping over the transactions connected with dora's agricultural operations. Maskuris or Yellollu should see that dora's instructions were followed and keep a watch that dora's work was done properly or not<sup>51</sup>.

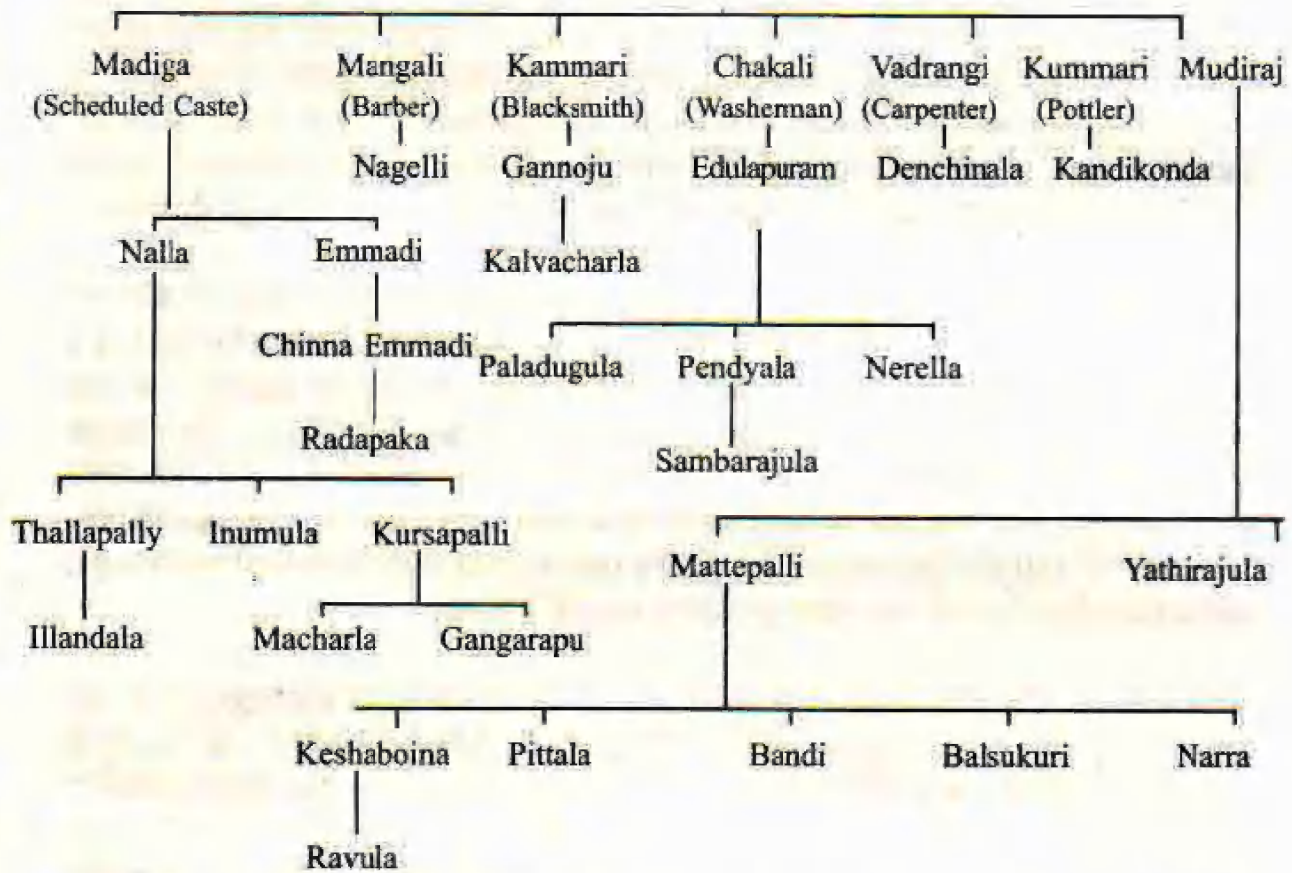
For all this vetti labour, the dora paid once in a year in kind (grain) in the name of Bicchalu<sup>52</sup> or Mamuls. The work was very heavy. So the work has been carried on rotation among the families of the caste which is known as tegalu came in vogue. If some families did vetti for a year, some other families did it in the next year. There were number of Pingili family households and so the vetti workers discharged their duties on rotation. In order to get relief in vetti and also to get time to cultivate their own inam and patta lands, illarikam method was found useful to free from the bonded labour or vetti which helps cultivate their own inam and patta lands<sup>53</sup>.

Not only they perform vetti in the village but had to render it at the houses of government officials located on the outskirts along with other vetti caste people of other villages on rotation. In this process their life became a rotten around the clock with the work of dora, village officers and the officers of the village outskirts. In order to get some relief from this, the artisan and service caste people of the village adopted a convention of illarikam. In light of this the artisans and servicing people forced to perform the marriages of their daughters with Youngman of other villages



or from the same village on illarikam, offering a share in their inam and patta lands and also a share in their vettichakiri (bonded labour), thus getting some relief of their burden, shifting it to son-in-law. Such marriages of illarikam, took place in the households of Madiga, Mudiraj, Washermen, and Blacksmith castes. But, in households of potter, carpenter and barber castes that practice was not in vogue. The following table explains in details the practice of getting son-in-laws based on illarikam as follows.

Table-2  
CASTES AND SURNAMES



The above table reveals that the artisan and servicing castes who felt burden in rendering vetti they invited bridegrooms from different villages. Those who had the surnames of 'Nalla' and 'Emmadi' among the Madiga caste people shown in the above table were the permanent residents of waddepally village. To reduce their burden in rendering vetti, son-in-law from other villages were brought to their homes on the base of illarikam, they were given share in lands of Inam and patta. The permanent inhabitants of Nalla families got their daughters marriage with the men bearing the surnames of 'Thallapally', 'Enumula' and 'Kursapalli' and brought them into their families on illarikam. Thallapally who came to Waddepally based on illarikam were earlier inhabitants of Manikyapur village in Karimnagar district; 'Enumula' hails from Bhimaram village in Warangal district; Kursapalli family is residents of Kyatampalli in the same Warangal district. Again, the Thallapally who



settled in Waddepally village married their daughters to men bearing surname of 'Illandula' who had hailed from kunoor village of Warangal district, and brought them to their home on illarikam. This proliferation of immigration on illarikam was forced to practice in the family of 'Kursapalli' also married their daughters with the surname of 'Macharla' of Tekulagudem village and bearers of surname of 'Gangarapu' of Dharmasagar in Warangal district. Similarly, the permanent residents of 'Emmadi' surname family also married their daughters with bearer of surname of 'Chinna Emmadi' of Gopalapuram village in Warangal district and bearers of surname of 'Chinna Emmadi' in their turn married their daughters with bearer of surname of 'Radapaka' of Tamadapalli village in Warangal district. Thus went on such marriages on illarikam in Madiga caste people of Waddepally village, The share has given to the immigrant son-in-laws in bolotha Inam and patta lands<sup>54</sup>. Thus, Nalla surname family had lands to the extent of 40 acres 04 guntas; Thallapally surname family holds 27 acres 39 guntas. Emmadis and Chinna Emmadi surname families holds together 19 acres 16 guntas; Enumulas surname family holds 7 acres 17 guntas; Kursapallis surname family holds 5 acres 15 guntas (of it Macharlas and Gangarapus had lands in 3:2 proportion); Illandula surname family holds 1 acres 09 guntas; and Radapakas surname family holds 15 guntas<sup>55</sup>.

Those who had the surnames of 'Mattepally' and 'Yatirajula' in the Mudiraj caste as shown in the above table were the permanent inhabitants of Waddepally village also practiced the same illarikam system which was adopted madiga caste in waddepally village. The men bearing surname of 'Kesaboina', 'Pittala', 'Bandi', 'Balsukari', and 'Narra' married the daughters of Mattepally family of wadeepally village on the base of illarikam and settled in waddepally village were invited to waddepally village. All these men originally hailed from Warangal district that bearer of surname of 'Kesaboina' came from 'Unikicharla', 'Pittala' from Hasanparthy, 'Bandi' from Girmajipet 'Balsukuris' from 'Devunur'. Of these 'Kesaboina' surname married with the daughters of men bearing surname 'Ravula' and brought them home. Their original place of inhabitation is not known. The immigrants were given share in their patta land and setsindhi Inam lands<sup>56</sup>. Thus, surnames of 'Mattepally' family's had lands to the extent of 38 acres 05 guntas, surname of 'Kesaboinas' family's had lands to the extent of 6 acres 32 guntas, surname of 'Yatirajulas' family's had lands to the extent of 3 acres 25 guntas, surname of 'Pittala' family's had lands to the extent of 2 acres 02 guntas, surname 'Bandis' family's had lands to the extent of 21 guntas and surname of 'Balsukuri' family's had land to the extent of 21 guntas<sup>57</sup>.

The same process of illarikam immigrations took place in washerman caste as well, of these who bear the surname of 'Edulapuram' were the permanent inhabitants of Waddepally village. They their daughters married with men bearing the surnames of 'Paladugala', 'Pendyala', and 'Nerella'. Of them, daughters of Pendayala again married with surnames of 'Sambharajula' on illarikam and brought



the sons-in-laws to their home. Thus, they gave share to the immigrants also, in turn the son-in-laws shared the vettichakiri<sup>58</sup> (bonded labour) of waddepally village. 'Edulapuram' had land to the extent of 34 acres 27 guntas (of it 'Nerellas' and 'Sambharajulas' had their share), 'Paladugula' holds 3 acres 37 guntas and Pendyala holds 07 guntas<sup>59</sup>.

Blacksmith caste men had also not lagged behind in getting some relief in their vetti labour by marrying their daughters on illarikam. 'Gannoju' were the original inhabitants of Waddepally village. They married their daughters on illarikam with the surnames of 'Kalvacherla'. After such marriages, thus were the chowthai Inam and patta lands retained and shared<sup>60</sup>. Gannoju had lands to the extent of 19 acres 31 guntas and Kalvacherlas holds 10 acres 12 guntas<sup>61</sup>.

## Conclusion

The artisan and servicing caste, like blacksmiths, potter, washerman, barber, carpenters and madigas etc. had to perform horrendous bonded labour to the landlords as well as to government officials in Telangana. As remuneration they were paid left over besides the Inam lands as nominal land tax. Such Inam lands account for 61 acres and 06 guntas in Waddepally village. The total cultivated land in the village is 2,385 acres and 18 guntas<sup>62</sup> i.e. 2.6 percent of land has been assigned to artisan and servicing castes towards inam of Inam lands. The families cultivated these Inam lands on annual rotation i.e. one family cultivated this year, another family cultivate in the next year<sup>63</sup>. The family which was not cultivated the land felt liberated from the bonded labour that year. Then any family enjoying the cultivating inam lands if they were not attended the free labour at the residency of dora and government officials they were perished horribly, particularly in the Madiga caste people who, for the sin of absenting themselves from the handed labour, were given roller treatment, hung from wooden pegs driven into walls made to carry heavy stone on the back merciless whipping etc.<sup>64</sup> There were so many families who stealthily left the village and migrated to other place abandoning (leaving) their house and hearth and their lands. Some stand their burden with the son-in-laws who were brought to their homes on illarikam, giving away a portion of their inam and Patta lands to them.

## References

1. Residence in the house of one's wife father - C.P. Brown; Son-in-law Adoption system. Generally illarikam marriages will take place who do not have male issue, they will adopt son of brothers, sister-in-laws or from else where. In case who do not accept the above, they will get bridegroom from the same village or from other village to his daughter as husband and invite him to his home. This bridegroom will reside along with father-in-law's. He will get share in the property of father-in-law or he will become a owner of entire property of father-in-law. At the old age to father-in-law and mother-in-law the bridegroom who has come from other family has to look after or take care of the parents of his wife retaining his surname as it is as his father holds.



2. Vetti means Forced Labour or bonded labour, which was mostly unpaid or very meagerly paid.
3. In the process of self-sufficient village system to make a total 12 called Ayagars. They were appointed to carry on the village administration, their duties included village administration, maintenance of law and order, increasing of agricultural production, collection of taxes and sending them to the ruling.
4. "Inam" is Arabic word which means favour or reward. As inam holding was thus a grant of land in which the state had given up its right to the land revenue or a portion of it, in favour of an individual or an institution, in return for the performance of certain duties as a charitable endowment without the obligation of service, or as reward to favorites. The grants were usually hereditary and permanent, and varied from small isolated fields to while village or several village; See A.I.Quareshi, The Economic Development of Hyderabad, Vol.No.1, Rural Economy, Orient Longmans Limited, Bombay, 1947, p.117.
5. S.Keshava Iyengar, Economic Investigation in the Hyderabad State 1929-30, Vol.I (General Survey), The Government Central Press, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1931,p.125.
6. 'vetti Jeethagadu' (unpaid free labour) or vetti Madiga in Andhra Pradesh 'Hale' in Gujarat, 'Jane 'Majhi or Ejhari in Jammu Kashmir, Nilbyponam in Kerala, 'Harpahvi' or 'Kamiya' or 'Hali' in Madhya Pradesh, 'vet' or 'Begar' in Maharashtra, 'jitha' in Karnataka, 'gotse' in Orissa, 'sagre' in Rajasthan, 'Khandit, Mandit or 'Sanjayat' in Uttar Pradesh' vyla' in Dedra and Nagar Haveli and 'Nadappu' in the Lakshdeep islands. Cited from: Someshwara Rao, G., Kathubanisatvam (Telugu) P. Satyanarayana (ed.) Prasaritha, Communication Science Quarterly, 46 (Oct-Dec.) Published by Speeto Book club, 1981, pp. 35-36.
7. Patwari for keeping and maintaining accounts of land holding and land revenue.
8. Title of Ownership Rights.
9. It refers to a 'Province' or 'division' consisting of 3 or 4 districts headed by a 'subedar' or 'commisoner'. This unit of administration was derived from Moughal system.
10. This Suba office situated in Waddepally revenue outskirts (sivar) in Survey Numbers 468 and 469. This building was built in 1295 Fasli(10-08-1886). Presently Warangal Collectorate is functioning in this building.
11. Subedar residence situated in Waddepally revenue outskirts (sivar) in Survey Numbers 470. This building was built in 1295 Fasli. Presently it is used for District Collector residence.
12. Treasury Office is situated in Waddepally revenue outskirts besides Subedar residence. Presently it is used to run University Arts&Science College.
13. Traveler Bungalow situated at Waddepally revenue outskirts, in the Survey Number 435, constructed in the year 1304 Fasli (1900). Actually this land belongs to American Baptist Society.
14. Police Naka (Out Post) situated in Waddepally revenue sivar in the survey Number 768, construction in 1320 Fasli(1911), situated near Pingili family residence (gadi), presently using for Veterinary Hospital.
15. Musafirkana is the 7<sup>th</sup> Chavadi in Warangal town, used as rest house for official visitors i.e. Girdavar, Ameen etc. and it is used for village level official legal or illegal transactions, hence the villagers called this as Moosapuri(cheating place).
16. The right of tax-collection was auctioned and tax farmers enjoyed the authority and advantage of collecting form the ryots much over and above the fixed amount that they paid to government.



17. Director General of Revenue Telangana, file No.14 of 1334 Fasli (1925) R.No.3909 of 1338 fasli(1929) and Warangal Subedari file No.88 of 1329 Fasli (1920) and R.No. 795 at 1331 Fasli (1922).
18. Mali Patel Collects revenue in the village.
19. Police Patel maintains law and order in the village.
20. K. Vijaya Babu., The Role of Youth Association in Cultural Revival in Telangana - A Study of Waddepally village, Warangal District, Andhra Pradesh History Congress, Proceedings of the 14th Session, Warangal, 1990, pp.253-257.
21. Ibid: also see: Bhadri Raju Seshagiri Rao, Andhra Pradesh Rytu Udyamalu: Rudraiah Chowdari, G.(ed), Telugu Academy,1990,p.66.
22. 40 guntas= 1acre; 2.5 acre= 1Hectare
23. 121 yards = 1 gunta.
24. Balotha Inam Land given to the Madigas. Looked after their low caste employed as a watchman, messenger and begari in the village establishment.
25. Balotha Inam lands Survey No.s53, 54, 55, 92, 93, 97, 98,114, 115, 567 and 731.
26. Chowthai Inam granted to Blacksmith, Potter, Barber, Carpenter, Washermen.
27. Chowthai Inam land Sy.Nos.: 60,73,80,85,139,156,583,622,644,750,751 and 774.
28. Setsindi Inam granted to maskuri, Talari or Setsindhi (Watchman for 50 houses in the village).
29. Setsindi Inam Land Sy.No.123, 124,406. 629 and 732.
30. Neeradi Inam granted neeradikadu who looked after the irrigation works and water supply to field.
31. Neeradi Inam Land Sy.No.59, 227,660 and 662.
32. Khairathi Inam freely granted lands to Poets, Scholars, Mattas(monasteries), Durgas (Forts), Artists.
33. Khairathi Inam land Sy.No.2, 78, 165, 420, 436, 432 and 676.
34. Deval Inams granted to priests.
35. Deval Inam sy.No, 647.
36. Centre of the Village, who ever officials visit the village; they will discharge their duties in chavadi.
37. Interview held with Thallapally Iddaiah S/o. Komuraiah, Farmer and Paler of Pingali family, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
38. Dora's residence-cum-office or Court.
39. Interviews held with T. Iddaiah S/o. Komuraiah, E. Bondaiah S/o. Buchaiah, and T. Purushotham, S/o. Gattaiah, belongs to Madiga Community, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District
40. Inrerview held with Nagavelli Yellaiah, S/o. Saheb, Barber and Setsindhi R/o. Waddepally, Warangal District.
41. Bolli Mallaiah, S/o. Ramaiah, Sethsindhi, belong to Mudiraj Community, Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
42. T. Manohar, Inamdari System in Telangana A Study of Warangal District 1911-1955, Op.Cit., p.8-11.
43. The weekly report on Land and Order.
44. Annual meet of Revenue officers and staff at divisional level in which the revenue collections made during the year were reviewed revenue demand for the ensuing year was fixed and land patta or ownership rights were granted.
45. Area fixed for wet crop.
46. Mota means it projects over the side of a well and the water is raised in a large leathern



- bucket puller up by bullocks that run down a declivity.
47. Interview held with T. Peeramma, W/o. T. Iddaiah, Labour, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
  48. Interview held with Thallapally Iddaiah S/o. Komuraiah, Farmer and Paler of Pingali family, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
  49. Wife of Dora or women belonging to Dora's family
  50. Interview held with Thallapally Iddaiah S/o. Komuraiah, Farmer and Paler of Pingali family, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
  51. Interview held with Neredi Yellaiah, S/o Ramulu, Neeratikadu, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
  52. Whatever gets on mercy in kind is called Bicchallu.
  53. Interview held with T. Purushotham, S/o. Gattaiah, Balotha Inamdar, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
  54. Interview held with T. Iddaiah, Nala Erra Komuraiah, Nella Elia, S/o. Ramaswamy, Nalla Komuraiah, S/o. Veeraiah, T. Solmon, S/o. Seetharamulu, Kurchapalli Kanakamma, W/o. Venkataiah and T. Kornel, S/o. Buchi Mallaiah, belongs to Madiga Community residents of Waddepally village, Warangal Dist.
  55. 1953-54 Khasra Pahani Patrika of Waddepally, Hanamkonda Revenue Mandal, Warangal Dist.
  56. Interviews held with Mattepally Balaliah, s/o. Chinna Komuraiah and Mattepally Rajamouli, S/o. Rajanna, belongs to Mudiraj community, R/o. Waddepally Village, Warangal District.
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# **Growth of Commercialisation and its Impact on Rural Telangana 1900 – 1945**

**S. Srinath & G. Yadava Reddy**

The growth of cash crops was one of the important developments of agrarian history of British rule in India. British rulers introduced high yielding cash crops for needs of the market. British Industries developed in light of Industrial Revolution needed increasing supplies of raw materials like cotton, oil seeds to produce manufactured goods. By 19<sup>th</sup> century instead of exporting manufactured products, Indian was forced to export raw material like raw cotton and oil seeds, which was urgently needed for the British industries. The plantation products like indigo, tea and food grains were shortage in supply in Britain. They were imported from other countries.

The growth of industry in Britain and the introduction and extension of commercial crops preceded hand in hand and were inseparably connected and created a market for each other. In this process colonial countries become suppliers of raw material to the industries of Britain and at the same colonial countries become important market centres for the sale of their products.<sup>1</sup>

There were neither modern industries nor cash crops in Hyderabad state till 1857. There was self-sufficient village economy: food grains like rice, jowar, maize wheat, barley were produced as food crops to meet the requirements of people of all kinds as well as for paying revenues of state. Apart from the food crops the traditional non-food crops like cotton for manufacture of cloth, castor for its use in cooking, lighting as well as other uses, seasmum, tobacco and chillies were also produced. By end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century: with the introduction of market economy the commercial crops like new varieties of cotton were introduced extensively. Around the same time cotton was first introduced in Marthwara tract and from there it was adopted in other parts of Telangana and Karnataka.<sup>2</sup>

The relation between the British India and Telangana indirectly helped the growth of commercial crops in Telangana. The whole Telangana region was surrounded by British India. The Nizam supported the needs of the British Empire and consequently the dry lands of Nizam state were suitable for non-food crops such as cotton, oil seeds, castor, chillies, tobacco and seasmum which were useful for raw material for British industries, so Nizam encouraged these non-food crops in his dominions. In British India the government policy favoured the production of cash crops, with the progress of Industrial revolution. British Industry needed an expanding supply of raw material. The textile mills at Lancashire, Manchester, Glasgow and Liver Pool have been looking for cotton to be imported.<sup>3</sup> In the Telangana region of Hyderabad state was the earlier practice of collecting, the land



revenue was in kind. But this changed during the tenure of Sir Salar Jung I as Diwan. To meet the growing expenditure of the state's exchequer in light of the subsidiary alliance with British in 1802 A.D, the government needed money therefore it demanded the peasants to pay the tax in terms of cash. To mobilize this cash, the peasants had to change their methods of cultivation, as they were needed to cultivate the cash crops. The regional climate has also helped for growth of commercial crops. The two important seasonal rains bearing winds, the south west and the north east monsoons were the main sources of rainfall.<sup>4</sup> The normal average rainfall of Telangana was about 33". While Adilabad in the northeastern parts of the state received 40", of rain, Raichur in the southwest received usually not more than 20".<sup>5</sup>

The irrigation department had also got organized itself. Because of the introduction of irrigation Projects, the average non-food crops sown had exceeded to the extent of 31.4 percent due to the cash crops in the state. On the whole, the irrigation development increased the area under cultivation of both food crops and commercial crops significantly.<sup>6</sup> It was reported that by 1937 there were 965 irrigation Tanks, and 5,364 irrigation wells in the selected villages of Warangal and revenue divisions of Telangana.<sup>7</sup>

The supply channels from a river or a perennial stream were constructed to carry water to tanks, the ryots could bail out water on either side of the channel by means of hand buckets called "**bhurki**" or "**guda**" and so get a constant flow.<sup>8</sup> In certain places, wells had two bullocks runs and two buckets and were capable of irrigating 4 to 5 acre of Rice or Sugar cane and 10 acres of garden land.<sup>9</sup> A number of major projects were completed in Telangana during fag end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and till the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup>

Agriculture department was established by the Nizam in 1911.<sup>11</sup> One note worthy feature is that the tanks that had been there from the Kakatiya Dynasty had been preserved to a greater extent and thus in certain districts especially Warangal and Medak, this irrigation potential had been utilized.<sup>12</sup> As a first step, the department had established certain agricultural farms for conducting research at different places in the state; Parbhani, Aler, KamaReddy, Mahaboobnagar, Uppal, SangaReddy, in the years 1915, 1916, 1917 respectively.<sup>13</sup> The department of agriculture had taken some land on lease and also some times it had bought the land for the farms. The farms were not only expected to experiment with crops to teach the farmers how the wastelands could be brought under cultivation.<sup>14</sup>

Government through agriculture department brought awareness among the farmers regarding the utility of high yield of commercial crops like **sugar cane, tobacco, Cotton** and oil seeds like **Groundnut and Castor crops**. In order to promote cash crops the Agricultural department even supplied manures. The officials also recommended usage of Ammonia Sulphate for the Sugarcane growers. Improved agricultural implements also were supplied to the farmers to utilize modern method of cultivation. Iron plough became popular for cultivation. The iron ploughs were



used for controlling the deep-rooted weed of the fields. There had been high demand for that Plough.<sup>15</sup> The agricultural stores sold of seeds, manures and implements.<sup>16</sup> The important commercial crops of Telangana of the Hyderabad state were, Sugarcane oilseeds like Groundnut and Castor cotton and Tobacco.<sup>17</sup> An account of the growth of these crops in Telangana region of the state is discussed below:

**Sugarcane:** After a decade and half of the establishment of the department the area under sugarcane cultivation was very negligible and the state had to import sugar from the regions like Madras and Pune. For instance in 1934 – 35, the area under sugarcane cultivation in Telangana region of the state was 7,996 acres only. Whereas Marathwara had 42,584 acres under sugarcane cultivation.<sup>18</sup> After the construction of Nizamsagar canal the Nizam Government had also established the Nizamsagar sugar factory in the year 1937.<sup>19</sup> The following table shows the area in acres under sugarcane cultivation in the Hyderabad State.

Year	Telangana region
1931-32	152
1934-35	7,996
1935-36	15,231
1936-37	18,676
1937-38	8,614
1938-39	8,120
1939-40	12,030
1940-41	17,995
1943-44	21,796
1944-45	29,055

**Source:** *Statistical yearbook. H.E.H the Nizam's Government for the year 1934-35, 1940-41 and 1943-44 to 1944-45.*

In Telangana region from 1934 onwards as the irrigation facilities increased gradually the acreage under sugarcane cultivation also increased.

### Cotton

Hyderabad state was known for high quality cotton, the contribution of Telangana region to the total production of the state was very less. The Nizam's government established the department of agriculture only to protect the Gorani type of cotton. When it was initially introduced in Marathwara, which became more demand able. The soil of the Telangana region of the state is Chalka Soil, which is Sandy whereas Marathwara regions. Soil is black soil, which was suitable for the cultivation of cotton.



**Area under Cotton (in acres) in the Hyderabad state**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Telangana region</b>	<b>Marathwara region</b>	<b>Total in the State</b>
1934-35	4,20,479	26,80,322	31,00,801
1935-36	4,39,000	32,58,749	36,97,749
1936-37	4,09,727	26,70,280	30,80,007
1937-38	3,96,192	31,66,826	35,63,018
1938-39	3,77,160	31,21,388	34,89,548
1939-40	4,04,965	27,82,929	31,87,894
1940-41	3,44,873	31,12,798	34,57,671
1943-44	4,84,257	36,20,716	41,04,973

**Source – Statistical Year Books, H.E.H the Nizam's Government**

Most of the cotton, produced in the state was exported to Bombay and even to foreign countries like England. The production of cotton in the state usually depended on the rainfall.

### **Oil seeds**

The Oil seed crops which were having considerable area under their cultivation were linseed, groundnut and til. In 1933-34 ninety percent of the area under linseed was in Marathwara tract alone. Only the remaining 10 percent of the area was under Linseed cultivation in Telangana region. By the year 1944 the area under linseed in Telangana increased to 25 percent of the total area of the state under Linseed.<sup>20</sup>

### **Seasum**

The area under seasum was fluctuating from time to time. In 1933-34, through the area under seasum was more in Telangana than in Marathwara region. Which by and large remained constant. In 1933-34 about 4,07,307 acres were under seasum cultivation, which extended to 4,88,244 acres in 1943-44.<sup>21</sup>

### **Groundnut**

No other crop has assumed such a degree of importance in the agricultural economy of Hyderabad state as groundnut. Groundnut was a both Kharif and rabi crop. It was rotated with Castor and Jowar in the dry regions and it was also rotated with rice in the irrigated tracts. It is believed that groundnut cultivation improves the fertility of the soil. In 1925-26 the total area under groundnut in the Telangana was around 3000 acres.<sup>22</sup> After the establishment of agriculture department groundnut cultivation improved. The department introduced two groundnut varieties like **Kanke No.17** and **Spanish Peanut**.<sup>23</sup> Groundnut cultivation made great advances in the present century under the stimulus of foreign trade. Groundnut Oil is being exported in large quantities to European markets and to Ceylon and Manritus in Asia.<sup>24</sup>

When the cultivation of groundnut increased the oil crushing industries were also developed in Telangana districts. The first oil mill was started at Yadgiri in Nalgonda district in 1919. By 1921 there were eleven oil mills in



Nalgonda and one in Warangal.<sup>36</sup> Groundnut cakes are exported to other parts of our country, 5% percent of the cakes are being absorbed by the local industry.<sup>25</sup> By supplying new variety of Kanke No.17 the Groundnut cultivation occupied about 1,50,000 acres of land in Telangana. Therefore farmers preferred cultivation of groundnut to Jowar.<sup>26</sup>

### **Castor**

Among the Oil seeds grown in Telangana Castor occupies an important place. The Hyderabad state had been in a commendable position in the foreign market regarding the Castor crop. The state had commanded almost half of the total area, under Castor in India. Taking the whole of India, Hyderabad stood first and Madras and Bombay Presidencies ranked second and third respectively in Castor cultivation.<sup>27</sup> The principal castor seed growing districts of Telangana were Nalgonda, Mahaboobnagar, Karimnagar and Warangal. In Nalgonda district, the taluks of Devarakonda, Janagaon and Bhongir were the chief centres. While Huzurnagar and Suryapet taluks cultivated it comparatively to a small extent. In Karimnagar district, all the taluks had more or less the same area in the allocation of the area under Castor. In Warangal district three fourths of the area in the district under Castor. In Medak, the cultivation of Castor was chiefly confined to Siddipet taluq.<sup>28</sup>

The Hyderabad government played significant role in the development of commercial crops. While in 1935 the total area under cultivation was, 1,15,348 acres and by 1937 it increased to 4,35,563 acres in the state. It must be noted that however cotton and groundnut were the principal crops that accounted for the expansion of cultivation. Another significant features were the increase in the export of various agricultural commodities that were produced. For instance in 1914 the value of export of cotton from the state in rupees was 34,714 where as in 1929 the same increased to 92, 356 rupees.<sup>29</sup>

### **Commercialisation Crops Impact on Rural Telangana**

Despite the growth of commercial agriculture on one hand and the extension of credit facilities by merchants, commercial banks and co-operative institutions on the other, the people especially the small peasants and agricultural labourers were led to indebtedness. The only class which was not affected during this period was the landlord class. Owing to the poverty of the small peasants and rent paying tenants a high burden of farm debt and high rates of interest paid by all categories of peasants and the moneylenders were familiar features of feudal agrarian society in Telangana. In Hyderabad state especially after land reforms of Salarjung the legal control on lands changed into the hands of a few land lords due to past status of Deshmukhs, Deshpandes and Deshais in the Government machinery, therefore small and poor peasants had to depend on them for their cultivation and investment needs.<sup>30</sup> with the development of such an economy and due to vicissitudes of the price behaviour in the markets, the small and poor peasants had to sell away their lands to clear off



their debts. Thus the phenomena had a multiplying effect on the pauperization of the peasantry.<sup>31</sup>

With commercialization and a fall in real income, coupled with deteriorating conditions of tenancy, indebtedness increased. By the late twenties the development of an export in some of the commodities, a hierarchical structure in credit market acquired control over the agrarian economy at the apex were Bombay merchants and joint stock banks who effectively converted independent dealers of agricultural commodities into their commission agents.<sup>32</sup> Smaller local merchants and in some cases land lords formed the next layer of the hierarchy. At the village level were professional moneylenders, Marwaris in Marathwara, Komatis in Telangana. But the conditions of the peasantry deteriorated it was not the professional moneylenders but landlord – cum moneylenders who grew in importance. Marathas in Marathwara, Lingayaths in Carnatic and Reddy's (Possibly some velamas also) in Telangana, were part of these "cultivating classes" that sucked the peasantry into the spiral of debt. In 1949-51, Iyengar estimated that of the total debt in the surveyed villages, 38 percent was due to these "Cultivating Familiar", while it was 31 percent in the case of Professional money lenders.<sup>33</sup>

The average annual interest was estimated in 1937 in 312 sample villages around 18 percent, but A.I. Qureshi suggests that this was an under estimate and puts it around 35 percent.<sup>34</sup> According to the memory of the peasants in the surveyed villages the total amount of their debt increased by 63 percent in the period 1931-39 and 83 percent in 1939-50.<sup>35</sup> Among small peasants and labourers, who had no worthwhile property, Land or Crop, to offer as security, the credit requirements accentuated the bondage. Most of the increasing proportion of landless tenants, including bhagelas fall into this category. In addition, Kabuliwalas, Rohillas and Arabs dominated the under world of credit market where the annual interest ranged from 75 to 150 percent.<sup>36</sup>

Commercialization also seems to have accentuated forms of extraction that were peculiar to the region like **Vetti Pani (or Vetti Chakiri)**. There was no limit on its extent and the concessions on which such free service was expected from the villagers.<sup>37</sup>

The absence of determinate or Unique relationship between movements of prices and changes in acreage and output their differential impact on different classes of people, the extent to which they were governed by the specific characteristics of social organization, the intensification of feudal forces of extracting surplus reflected in particular in the peasant revolt against them<sup>38</sup> – all would indicate the nature and limitations of the process of commercialization of agriculture in Hyderabad.



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14. The Department of agriculture wanted to show the use of improved agricultural implements taking advantage of the melas, Jatras etc, where thousand of cultivate came and have Leisure enough to see the work
15. The blacksmiths in the rural areas made of the iron plough on the same model which were cheap and the cultivator's bought then rapidly and also see the Royal Commission report on Indian Agriculture in India. London 1928, Page No. 110-111 Annual Administrative reports of the Department of agriculture the Nizam's Government 1930. Page No.16.
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# HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE CAUSES FOR THE FALL OF KAKATIYAS OF WARANGAL

T. Dayakar Rao

The historiography on the causes for the fall of Kakatiyas and rise of regional powers is broadly divided into three schools of thought. The Traditional school<sup>1</sup> of thought which identified the nature of state of the medieval South India as 'centralized bureaucratic system and monarchical form', attributes the campaigns and conquests of the kings as cause to the rise and a fall of the kingdoms. Defects in the administrative system, particularly military organisational pattern and war craft were accounted for. Further the frequent participation of the king in the suppression of local rebellions or local chiefs invasions in neighbourhood and foreign attacks especially the Muslim expansion<sup>2</sup> into Andhradesa were also thought to be responsible for the fall of kingdom.

For the fall of the Kakatiya Kingdom this school attributed Prataparudra's extensive military exploits and Muslim invasions, as the main reasons for the downfall of the Kakatiyas. Further the very nature of the state, i.e. 'Nayamkara System', the Reddi-Valama conflict were thought to be responsible for the fall of the Kakatiya empire<sup>3</sup>. The rise of regional Hindu kingdoms in the post-kakatiya times was represented to champion the cause of Hindu Dharma against Muslim depredation. The vilasa grant<sup>4</sup> of musunuri Prolaya nayaka describes the condition of the post-kakatiya times as follows.

"The cruel wretches subjected the rich to torture for the sake of their wealth. Many of their victims died or terror at the very sight of their vicious countenance, the Brahmins were compelled to abandon their religious practices, the images of the gods were over turned and broken; the agraharas of the learned were confiscated; the cultivators were despoiled of the fruits of their labour; and their families were impoverished and ruined. None dared to claim anything whether it was a piece of property or one's own wife. To these despicable wretches wine was ordinary drink, beef, the staple food, and the slaying of the Brahmins the favourite pastime. The land of Andhra desa, left without a protector, suffered destruction from the yavanas like forest subjected to devastating wild fire". "There was born, as it an amsa' of the God Vishnu who took pity on the suffering of the people, had descended from heaven, the king prola of the Musunuri family of the fourth caste, who assumed the sovereignty of earth. He destroyed the power of the Yavanas who abandoned those forts and fled to unknown places unable to resist his mighty, the very people who suffered at the hands of the Yavanas sought protection under him and turned against and put them to death. Having overcome the Yavanas in this fashion, he restored to brahmins their ancient agraharas confiscated by them, and revived the performance of the sacrifices the smoke issuing from the fire pits of which spreading over the country side claimed it of the pollution caused by the



movements of those evil-doers. The agriculturists surrendered willing a sixth of the produce of the soil to the king, and he set out his hand to the task of repairing the damages caused by the parasikas. King Prola established himself at Rekapally on Godavari at the foot of the Malyavanta mountain, and having entrusted the administration to his younger brother, Kapayanayaka, he devoted himself to the performance of charitable and meritorious deeds. He granted many agraharas and large sums of money to deserving scholars". This was interpreted by the Traditionalists as upholding Hindu dharma by the Hindu regional powers against Muslim threats and violence. It seems that the regional powers the Velamas of Racakonda, the Reddis of kondavidu, the Rayas of Vijayanagara etc., who emerged only to champion the cause of Hindu dharma which was violated due to Muslim attacks and plunder caused by them.

The Marxist School<sup>5</sup> of thought which represented the state as a 'decentralised power structure' wherein a class of landed intermediaries exist between the king and peasants viewed differently. These landed intermediaries of the feudal lords who became strong by possessing land and power delegated by kings, declared independence when over-lord became weak, i.e., immediately after the fall of the one dynasty, the powerful feudatories declare independence and develop into regional powers with the expense of neighbouring weak feudal lords. Kambampati Satyanarayana<sup>6</sup> mentions, that the lack of military discipline and upto date armour in the kakatiyan forces, internecine warfare among the feudal lords, the growth of Nayankara system, the Reddi Velama's conflict, excessive taxation and rise of regional kingdoms, the plunder by the Muslim chieftains were some of the main causes for the fall of Kakatiyas and the rise of regional powers in Andhra in the post-Kakatiya period.

The American school of thought which views the nature of medieval South Indian state as "multicentred power structure 'wherein' different power centres are linked 'dually', i.e., royally and ritually opines that the regional powers are nothing than structural continuities of local power, over either the 'patrimonial or prebendial regimes'. This school of thought believes that when the linkages between the 'king' and the different power groups, either royally or ritually are lost the whole structure will collapse and the 'local power groups' gradually develop into 'supra-local' and finally to regional powers either by curbing the power of the neighbouring states or shifting alliances frequently among themselves.<sup>7</sup>

While the first two schools of thought, stress on the defaults of the administration and external threats, and feudal warfare, the third school of thought sheds light on the very nature of the state and linkages between the kings and different power groups.

Now the responsibility of Nayankara system for the downfall of the kakatiya kingdom and the emergence of regional powers are to be discussed.

The Nayankara system, which established the construction of forts as well



as the subordinate powers, was viewed differently. The Traditional School viewed it as an order of state official in which assimilated, all chiefly authorities. It is a form of bureaucracy to perform the duties on behalf of the king<sup>8</sup>.

The Marxist school viewed the Nayankara system as a feudal institution, which served, on the delegation of power by the sovereign<sup>9</sup>.

The American School views this institution as a 'supra local' body which emerged between the monarchy and locality by virtue of semi-patrimonial possessions. In other words, loyal potentates having got the recognition of the monarch, legalised and expanded the rights and possessions and become as supra-local power<sup>10</sup>.

In Velugorivarivamsavali<sup>11</sup> it is mentioned that Prasaditya introduced the Nayankara system in the reign of Rudrama Devi and it was well organized by the time of Pratapa Rudra. According to 'Nitisara'<sup>12</sup> the king should assign villages to the nayakas in lieu of their salaries and the maintenance of the army for the king's use. All the samantas in the country under this system were permitted with the condition of maintenance compulsorily some army for the service of the king in times of war. By the time of Prataparudra the nature of Nayankara system of military administration had changed. Prataparudra entrusted the defence of the seventy seven bastions of his fort only to the Velama community. It is held that the nayakas of the early Kakatiya period were the rudiments of nayamkaras of the late Kakatiya period.<sup>13</sup>

The 'local' dominant peasant warrior groups rose to the status of 'supra local' powers by becoming nayamkaras, holding nayankaras and gradually develop into the 'regional powers' when they lose royal and ritual links with their overlord. It seems that during the later part of the Kakatiya period, i.e., in the times of Prataparudra, there was a gradual reduction of 'racabhumis' which were held by the royal officials who acted as the check against the 'nayankara holdings'. It resulted in losing the royal links to the king. Moreover decrease in the number of agraharas, devabhogas held by the Brahmins and temples which acted as the pace-maker or the buffer zones between the different 'war units' contributed for the loss of ritual links. When the two links are lost there was much scope for the consolidation of 'supra local power' by frequently shifting their alliances with the neighbouring units of power' thereby emerging out as the regional powers immediately after the central power collapses.

Thus the extensive growth of Nayankara system or the very nature of the 'war state' of the Kakatiya empire was an inbuilt aspect of the fall of the Kakatiyas and structural continue of the 'Supra-local powers into regional powers.

Added to this, the frequent Muslim attacks made in the times of Prataparudra 7 times according to Pratapacharitra and 5 times to Muslim records drained away the wealth of the empire to Delhi. The details of war indemnity runs as follows:



When the Muslims attacked on Telangana in 1309 A.D., Prataparudra resisted stubbornly but finally had to surrender all the treasures, elephants, horses and promised to pay annual tribute and to attend military assistance in his further campaigns. Isamy<sup>14</sup> mentions only wealth and 23 elephants. But AmirKhusru says that Malik Naib carried away to Delhi on this occasion wealth in addition to gold image of the Raya of Telangana and one hundred elephants. According to Abdulla was of that gold weighed 6000 Kharwars of loads of gold. Much yellow gold was in the large sacks. It is stated by AmirKhusru Malik<sup>15</sup> left Warangal with all his booty and "a thousand camels groaned under the weight of treasure". In the third attack of Muslims over telangana in 1316 Khusru Khan, general of Muslim forces, had collected from Prataparudra one hundred elephants, 12000 horses, gold, jewels and gems and lastly ceded five districts of his kingdom. In the final action Prataparudra had to surrender all his wealth in his treasury, numerous elephants and horses and finally himself on that occasion. The whole city of Warangal was plundered<sup>16</sup>. Thus the Muslim attacks into Telangana resulted in bankruptcy of treasury and decreased the state economy. The wealth that accumulated since many years by the Kakatiyas was handed over to Muslim generals. The country of Telangana economically as well as politically became very weak hence disintegrated.

To summarise, the defaults in the structure of administration and external raids, feudal warfare and very nature of the state etc., were thought to be responsible for the fall of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. Further the extensive growth of Nayamkara system or the very nature of the 'war state' of the Kakatiya Empire was an in built aspect of the fall of the Kakatiyas.

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# **The Tribal Chiefs of Polavaram and Their Struggles Against the British Colonialism in Andhra (1768-1803)**

**K.Vijaya Babu & S.Chandra Kala**

## **Introduction:**

The Circars of Srikakulam, Rajahmundry and Ellore (Later Godavari district) were called Northern Circars during the British rule, because of their relative situation to the Fort St. George, the head quarters of the Madras Presidency. There were a number of tribal estates which were nominally dependent on the plain Zamindaries. The Zamindaries of plains along with the tribal estates were transferred to the East India Company after the treaty of 1768 concluded between the English Company and the Nizam.

While the Zamindaries of plains welcomed the transfer without showing resistance on their part the tribal chiefs pretended their allegiance to the Zamindars of plains and ignored the takeover of the region by the English. Most of these tribal chiefs being strategically entrenched in the impregnable hilly regions of the eastern ghats resisted all the attempts of the English to cause any erosion in their liberty and autonomy.

In this paper an attempt has been made to bring to light the anti-British activities of the tribal chiefs in Polavaram Estate against the British Colonial power during its early period.

This paper is mostly based on the material collected from the District Records (Factory Records) Preserved in the State Archives, Hyderabad besides some secondary sources.

The Polavaram Zamindary was an important estate with Gutala and Kottapally estates as its dependants. Managapathi deo was its popular Zamindar. Vijayagopala Deo and Narasimha Deo were his half brothers who were Zamindars at Gutala and Kottapally respectively.

The Zamindars of Polavaram originated from the Rajas of Orissa. The first known Zamindar of the family Venkatapathi Roy Deo had two sons. They were Jagannadha and Mangapathi. On the death of Jagannadha, his son Venkataramul divided the Zamindary in 1736 between himself and Gutala was given to his uncle. Mangapathi Deo was killed at the instigation of his nephew (Venkataramul Deo) and was succeeded by his son Latchminarain Deo. He had two wives. Mangapathi Deo and Narasimha Deo were the sons of the first wife. Vijayagopala Deo was the son of the second wife Seetamah.

Venkataramul, the Polavaram Zamindar's only son, died in 1771. The Zamindar also passed away in 1772. Therefore, Mangapathi Deo, the eldest son of Latchminarain Deo came to power in 1772 and the company also confirmed it. Later, Latchminarain Deo died in 1780.



Since Mangapathi Deo was a minor, his Diwan Sitaramayya divided the Zamindary among the three brothers. Polavaram was given to Mangapathi Deo, Gutala to Vijayagopala Deo and Kottapally to Narasimha Deo<sup>2</sup>. The three minor zamindars ruled their territories with the help of Managers. On account of their family disputes, they could not manage effectively and disturbances occurred in their regions.

In 1784, Sitaramayya died and one Panakal looked after the management of Polavaram, Kottapally as gumasta of the Zamindars. In Gutala, one Rangam was the Diwan and Venkatachalam was gumasta. They were loyal to the English and were working under the supervision of the British Company's Government<sup>3</sup>.

**(a) Revolt of Dasureddy of Gutala:** Dasureddy, a hill poligar under the Zamindar of Gutala invaded Gutala<sup>4</sup> in 1785. He hailed from a fort called Nagavaram about fifteen miles away from Gutala. It was said that Dasureddy opposed the rule and behaviour of Manager, Rangam of Gutala. He captured the fort took away the young Raja and his mother along with Rangam and confined them. The Company Government interfered in the matter and sent seven companies of sepoys under the command of Capt. Hugh Montgomery<sup>5</sup> to punish the rebel. On the advance of the troops, Dasureddy escaped into the hills<sup>6</sup>.

Later, Dasureddy sent an explanation to Government, in which he expressed that he did not revolt against them but acted at the people's request to remove Rangam from the post of Diwan<sup>7</sup>.

Capt. Montgomery attacked the fort of Gutala and also seized the aims of Dasureddy<sup>8</sup>. About eighty peons and sepoys were killed on both sides during the seize of Gutala fort. Later, the people forced Dasureddy to submit to the company and he also agreed to give-up the Zamindary if the troops would retire to Nagavaram<sup>9</sup>.

Then, Dasureddy brought the Raja with him but stopped at a place two miles away from Gutala, because the troops had not left<sup>10</sup>. Meanwhile, the young Zamindar Vijayagopala Deo and his mother prayed the company for their release<sup>11</sup>. As Dasureddy did not submit immediately, Capt. Montgomery was directed to expel him<sup>12</sup>. When the efforts were on to capture Dasureddy, his own followers delivered him to the troops of the Company<sup>13</sup>. Eventually, the Zamindar Vijayagopala Deo and his mother were released<sup>14</sup>. Dasureddy and his brothers were detained at Masulipatam according to the directions of the Board of Revenue<sup>15</sup>.

During the years of Dasureddy's disturbances, two hill leaders named Koneti Tammadu and Viramallu Kannayya occupied Kottapally<sup>16</sup>. The company sent seven companies of sepoys and crushed them. Thereafter, restored the area to their original owners.

Similar disturbances occurred during the years 1786 and 1787. The hill people who were the followers of Dasureddy were responsible for them. They were suppressed by the Company's troops. During that period, the revenue of Polavaram



was paid regularly, but Gutala's payments fell into arrears. Therefore, in 1788, Bavaji, Mangapathi's Diwan was appointed Manager to all the three Zamindaries put together. In 1790 Bavaji died and one Chatripanakalu was appointed Diwan<sup>17</sup>.

**(b) Seetamah of Gutala:** The revolt of Dasureddy resulted in the failure of Gutala in paying the rent regularly. The arrears mounted by the year 1786. Therefore, the Company placed this estate under the control of the Diwan of Polavaram. Seetamah, the mother of minor Zamindar of Gutala Vijayagopala Deo opposed this measure of the Company and revolted in the years 1786, 1787. When the Zamindar's mother refused to pay the tribute, though she collected the revenue, the Company interfered and Capt. Muat was sent to suspend the authority of the minor Zamindar<sup>18</sup>. The Chief recommended that either Mangapathi Deo, the Zamindar of Polavaram should act as Zamindar till the minor attains majority or that Gutala should be annexed to Polavaram<sup>19</sup>.

The Chief at Masulipatam directed Capt. Muat to capture the Gutala fort and publish takids (orders) suspending the minor Zamindar's authority<sup>20</sup>. The Company wanted to compel the zamindar's mother to reside at Polavaram alongwith their relations.

Seetamah knew the intentions of the Company and escaped into the forests. The Government reinforced it's troops and began the military operations. At this juncture, Seetamah returned to Gutala and agreed to surrender one gate of the fort. By that time Capt. Muat reported to the Chief that his detachment was in possession of the gate ways of the fort of Gutala and also wrote that she had agreed to pay certain amount of revenue. Though the Zamindar's mother had certain number of peons with her, she did not resist. As situation was not so dangerous, Capt. Muat did not publish the takids<sup>21</sup>.

When the soldiers got into the fort at night, the Zamindar's mother was in a desperate condition with anger. At that juncture, the peons who guarded the fort deserted her. Therefore, Seetamah concealed sixty men in one of her apartments. Capt. Muat entered the fort and assured Seetamah her personal safety. But she opened the door, dragged her son into the room where her adherents were concealed. There were two large open pots of gun powder, and she threatened to explode herself along with the followers and enemies who were nearing her. Then, the English troops retired in order to pacify her. Later she surrendered quietly to the English troops and guards were stationed to prevent her escape<sup>22</sup>.

Seetamah was taken to Masulipatam alongwith her son Vijayagopala Deo and were detained. She died in April 1791. The three estates of Polavaram, Gutala, Kottapally were granted to Mangapathi Deo of Polavaram by the Chief and council of Masulipatam<sup>23</sup>.



### C) Vijayagopala Deo and Mangapathi Deo of Polavaram

Mangapathi Deo, the Zamindar of Polavaram did not pay the revenue for the years 1793, 1794 and 1795. Therefore, Branfill, the collector for the third division, arrested him and ordered troops to guard the Zamindary<sup>24</sup>. He also proposed to divide the Zamindary again which was rejected by the Board of Revenue. Meanwhile Mangapathi requested him to rent the two Zamindari of Polavaram and Gutala. He expressed his readiness to pay some amount on the day of his release. His brother Vijayagopala Deo also made a request for the same Zamindari<sup>25</sup>. But the Board of Revenue kept the Zamindary under sequestration and proposed to restore it to Mangapathi Deo on clearance of arrears<sup>26</sup>. Mangapathi Deo once again promised to pay a portion of his arrears immediately on his release and for the balance he promised to give security<sup>27</sup>.

The Government approved the terms offered by Mangapathi and said he should pay 16,226 MPs immediately on his released and balance of 8,000 MPs in two years with security for the regular payments<sup>28</sup>. One Manga Basavappa who entered into an engagement on behalf of Mangapathi had fulfilled it<sup>29</sup>. Mangapathi even after this engagement did not pay regularly and became refractory by assembling hill people<sup>30</sup>. The Collector observed that though there was famine and overflow of Godavari river, the main reason for the fall of revenue was the mismanagement of Zamindar<sup>31</sup>. He also said that the Zamindar was not interested to adhere to his engagement. At the same time, Mangapathi detained the Company's gumasta on the ground that he told him that Lt.Blake would take him Prisoner<sup>32</sup>. Later, in view of the refractory conduct of the Zamindar the troops were stationed at Polavaram to prevent the loss of revenue<sup>33</sup>.

Mangapathi proposed to clear the arrears provided he was given remission for customs on teakwood<sup>34</sup>. But the Board of Revenue rejected to give any remission to the Zamindar<sup>35</sup>. Later, as per earlier agreement, in order to pacify the Zamindar, the troops were removed from Polavaram and company assured him to punish the gumasta who was detained by him for his misbehaviour. Even after these assurances, the Zamindar did not release the gumasta. He continued to defy the Government and did not clear the arrears<sup>36</sup>. His request for remission was rejected by the Government as he already collected timber tax within his territory against the orders of the Company<sup>37</sup>. Later, the collector called the gumasta of Polavaram and came to know about the accounts of the Zamindary which revealed that the collections were above the amount due to the Company. But the Zamindar neglected to pay the dues<sup>38</sup> and again escaped into the hills and tried to win over his brother Vijayagopala Deo<sup>39</sup>.

When Mangapathi Deo was creating disturbances against the Company, Vijayagopala Deo was shifted from Masulipatam to Rajamudry in 1796. He offered to pay the balance and current kists if Gutala was restored to him from Mangapathi who did not pay the arrears. When the Government rejected his offer, he escaped



from Rajamundry in May 1798<sup>40</sup>. One Naganna who was dismissed by Mangapathi Deo instigated him to create disturbances. The company declared a reward of 500 MPs or 1,000 MPs to arrest him<sup>41</sup>. Vijayagopala Deo went to Rampa country and later he joined Linga Reddy, a hill chief, who was a nominal dependant on polavaram Zamindary without paying any revenue. Vijayagopala Deo assembled about 1,000 peons with the help of Linga Reddy and other hill chiefs and looted villages in Polavaram Zamindary<sup>42</sup>.

Mangapathi Deo wrote a letter to his brother vijayagopala Deo to join him. At that time Narsimha Deo, another brother also joined him. Mangapathi proposed combined anti-British disturbances in and around the Polavaram Zamindary. But after three months, vijayagopala Deo surrendered himself to the Company at Ganapavaram<sup>43</sup>. Narsimha Deo was also arrested. The Collector later recommended a monthly allowance of Rs.100/- to vijayagopala Deo<sup>44</sup>.

Meanwhile, Mangapathi entered the village of Kondamoodalova, a place independent of both company and the Nizam of Hyderabad, assembled some other hill people and raided the company's territories<sup>45</sup>. Col. Smith was ordered to proceed against him<sup>46</sup>. The peons of Mangapathi plundered the vicinities of Ganapuram<sup>47</sup>. An English lady named Mrs. Mc Qully on her way to Madras was also robbed by them<sup>48</sup>.

The peons of Mangapathi then surrounded Johnson, the officer incharge of the detachment at koila kondapuram and plundered the vicinities<sup>49</sup>. They later raided chagallu village in kovvuru paragana<sup>50</sup>. Some of the merchants of Jaggampetta, were also robbed by Mangapathi's men<sup>51</sup>.

After the arrest of Narsimha Deo, mangapathi was isolated and took shelter at charuvaka village. Later, he fled to Rampa country. Linga Reddy and Mangapathi Deo then jointly created disturbances<sup>52</sup>. The Rampa people also assembled<sup>53</sup> to support him and tried to attack the two companies of troops stationed at Kondamokala<sup>54</sup>. The company Government believed that the strength of the Rampa people between 800 and 1,000 and the rebel Zamindar paid them 1,000 MPs for this purpose<sup>55</sup>. The company published a proclamation, warning Rampa Raja and the people of Rampa against taking up arms and plundering the villages, failing which they would be arrested and hanged<sup>56</sup>.

The company feared an attack on Koruconda country and stationed troops<sup>57</sup> and warned Linga Reddy not to take up arms against the company, otherwise, he and his family would be awarded severe punishment and his country would be transferred to some other<sup>58</sup>. As a warning, the English set fire to some of his villages and carried away his cattle<sup>59</sup>. The Company troops also punished people of Rampa Raja who plundered Koruconda and Kottapally villages<sup>60</sup>. The Zamindar of Golconda who gave shelter to Rampa people was also warned<sup>61</sup>. The Company entered into an alliance with the Zamindar of Bhadrachalam to prevent him from giving any support to rebels<sup>62</sup>. when Mangapathi took shelter in the Nizam's



dominions, the English Resident at Hyderabad obtained the permission of the Nizam to pursue the rebel<sup>63</sup>.

The zamindar of Kota, Kakarlapudi Jaganatha Raju proposed to arrest Mangapathi Deo and to establish peace in the Polavaram zamindary if it was granted to him<sup>64</sup>.

The proposals of the Zamindar of Kota were accepted by the Government and proclamation was made for the transfer of Polavaram to Kota<sup>65</sup>. The Company supplied arms and ammunition to Kota zamindar to suppress Mangapathi according to the agreement<sup>66</sup>.

Even after the transfer of Zamindary the situation did not improve and the Kota Zamindar failed to fulfill the conditions of his agreement. When disturbances increased, he regretted for his hasty undertaking and requested the Company to excuse him<sup>67</sup>. The Government accepted and released him from the engagement<sup>68</sup> and the company resumed the zamindary administration by a notification<sup>69</sup>.

Mangapathi Deo continued his activity of plundering the company's villages. He used to hide himself in the hills and sent his people to plunder the villages. Therefore, the Collector gave a brief description of the place where the rebel had the shelter and sent a rough plan of it to Lt. Col. Gardiner<sup>70</sup>. Capt. John English, was ordered to proceed to Polavaram<sup>71</sup>. Col. Vigors was ordered to station his troops to prevent any disturbance<sup>72</sup>. When the troops reached Polavaram, Mangapathi Deo had retreated to a village belonging to Asswa Rao, the Zamindar of Bhadrachalam near the Papiconda hill. His wife and brother had gone to Kottapally or Waddayagudem<sup>73</sup>. The Governor in council authorized Col. Vigors to assemble a court of officers for the trial of the arrested rebels and to give them immediate death punishment<sup>74</sup>.

Later, a proclamation was made to give an opportunity to the rebels to surrender unconditionally within seven days from the date of proclamation and reward was also declared to those who would help in the arrest of the rebels. The Government also warned the hill people who went to support Mangapathi to return to their houses. Otherwise, they would be tried before a military tribunal and punished with immediate death<sup>75</sup>. In spite of these measures, there were disturbances at koilagudem and Ganapuram villages<sup>76</sup>. Bad roads and the number of passes through which the troops must march to charuvaka where the refractory Zamindar had taken shelter and the opposition of the native people did not permit the company troops to arrest Mangapathi Deo<sup>77</sup>.

As the situation did not improve at all, the Governor in Council directed Lt. Col. Campbell to undertake most decisive offensive operations against Mangapathi Deo. He was given freedom and powers to utilise all Government's resources<sup>78</sup>.



All the neighbouring Zamindars of Pitapuram, Peddapuram and Bhadrachalam were again ordered to co-operate with the English troops. The Government declared a reward of Rs.10,000/- for the apprehension of Mangapathi Deo<sup>79</sup>. Col. Campbell occupied Polavaram and granted Cowles to others. He also burnt some villages of Mangapathi Deo. He suggested that Vijayagopala Deo should be released from confinement and be given some Zamindary so that some hill people support him and the strength of Mangapathi would be decreased<sup>80</sup>. The Company Government did not believe both vijayagopala Deo and Narsimha Deo who were under their custody and appointed Latchminarayan Deo son of Mangapathi Deo the Zamindar of Polavaram in order to suppress the disturbances and restore peace and order<sup>81</sup>.

At the time of the Permanent Settlement, the Collector reported to the Special Commission that the jama-bandi of Polavaram, Gutala and Kottapally Zamindars may be fixed at MPs 30,200 from 1219 F, jama-bandi from 1212 F or 1213 to 1215 F, MPs 26,000 and from 1216 F to 1218 F, MPs 28,000<sup>82</sup>.

Latchminarayan Deo died on 16-9-1805 and had appointed his mother Butchammah by a will as his heir<sup>83</sup>. Later, Kottapally estate was sold in auction in 1808 for the recovery of arrears. In 1809, Polavaram and Gutala were also auctioned for similar reasons<sup>84</sup> of disturbances and accumulation of arrears.

### Conclusion

The Zamindary of Polavaram was an important centre of tribal resistance against the British colonialism soon after the transfer of circars to the English East India Company. In the early years the Zamindars of the estate were loyal to the company Government. But when disputes occurred in their family because of some internal differences, the Company Government always tried to dictate terms in order to safeguard their financial and revenue interests. The frequent administrative changes and change of Zamindars caused much dissatisfaction in the minds of the Zamindars of Polavaram. The disillusioned and disgusted native Zamindars made-up their mind to revolt against the colonial Company rule and continued their heroic struggle till the end of their life. The strategy with which the British could control the plain Zamindars did not yield expected results in the case of tribal estates. The hills, thick forest helped as natural shelter to the tribals and they easily defied the outside powers.

When we closely examine the tribal revolts occurred in Coastal Andhra region against the British Rule, we would understand that the underlying spirit of the tribal tradition is to live in peace with dignity and independent of any external control. Freedom is dearer to them than any other interest. The heroic struggles of Palaconda chiefs and their followers against the foreign domination unfolds the above truth.



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# **FAMINES AND RELIEF MEASURES IN QUTBSHAHI ANDHRA – A BRIEF STUDY**

**A. Bobbili & Y. Venkateswarlu,**

The non-availability of minimum food – stuff necessary for the survival of man can be termed as famine. Suicides, hunger deaths were common in the event of famines. To define it, a "Famine is a catastrophe, an acute and extreme shortage of food supply, effects a large number of people with hunger and starvation and it also ruins the standard of living of the people and the state economy".

**CAUSES OF FAMINES:** Generally there are three major causes which effects the economical life of the people, i.e. a) Lack of rains b) Heavy rains (floods) c) War related famines. All these causes are mentioned below.

**A) FAMINES-LACK OF RAINS:** In a Predominantly agricultural country like India, famines were common. It suffered from famines since the time immemorial. It appears that in the earlier times, a major famine used to occur once in every 50 years. From the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were 14 famines almost all of which were confined to small areas. For example, a great famine was broke – out in the Deccan, Gujarat and khandesh in AD 1630 during the period of Shahjahan, the Moghal emperor. The Moghal government took necessary steps to rehabilitate the villagers. Rs. 70, 00, 000 spent on the famine effected areas towards canal digging works.

As in the case of Golconda Kingdom, Kattampudi kaifiat mentions that in the year A.D. 1578 a famine occurred in the local area of Murthuzanagar paragana of Golconda, the same fact is attested by Kasuvu karvu kaifiat and the people of this paragana suffered a lot<sup>1</sup>. in A.D. 1622 (7<sup>th</sup> July) Andries Soury, the Dutch factor at Muchilipatnam, who sent a letter to Coen at Batavia (Holand) about starvation that it was true that over the last four years hundreds of persons had died of starvation in Pulicat and surrounding areas because of the famine and the high prices. During this period i.e. A.D. 1618-22; a large number of slaves were available to supply a broad. It reveals the famine at coromandal coastal towns and its effects<sup>2</sup>.

Another great famine accured in A.D. 1630 at eastern Golkonnda Kingdom, where thousands of weavers settled round palicat, san thome and Madras found themselves in a helpless condition and thousands of people died like rats. In this draught, people exchanged their own sons for bread at the rate of one bread for one man people did not hesitate to eat their children and it was called as Dokkala karuvu in Telugu term<sup>3</sup>.

About which the Surat anuthorities wrote to the company thus: "machilipatnam and Armagaon was Sorely opprest with famine, the living eating up the dead and men durst scarsly travel in the country for fear they should be killed and eaten. The famine began three years previously and grew most acute in A.D.



1630. about its consequences the Machilipatnam authorities wrote "Which with the unusual great cargo zone invested this year in this place, with many free traders, Dutch had Danes, etc, had raised the price of cloth to an extraordinary rate and scarce to be procured and had also beaten down the price of gold, alum and broad cloth, that in one hundred years there had not neither may be expected, the like to the great hindrance and loss to our part of the second General Uoyadge"<sup>4</sup> and resultantly prices of the essential commodities were enhanced. Rice which used to be sold at 12 maunds a hun, was sold at the enhanced price of 7 maunds per hun which works out to about 60 seers for rupee<sup>5</sup>.

Another severe famine, broke out in A.D. 1647, second time in seventeen years in Andhradesa. It was referred to in a letter written to Surat by the Madras factors. According to it, the famine "almost destroyed all the Kingdom", the loss of life in Madras since September being reckoned at 3000, which Santhome and Pulicat had each lost about 5 times that number. Out of our little towns, says the letter, "there had died no less than 3000 people since September lost in Pulicat as report said, 15000 and in Santhome no less. So that all the painters and weavers were dead, so that there cannot be expected any quantity of cloth to be procured this three years"<sup>6</sup>.

In A.D. 1685, another famine reported in Guntur district, which was called Mahakshamamu or the great famine. As per the village Kaifiats, the village people used to worship in the temples to recover their economic life and this people unable to bear the impact of the famine, they migrated to another districts and some died and some sustained depending on the forest produce like bamboo-rice (Vedurubiyyam), roots (Tungamutyalu), the pulp of palm – trees or Eethagujju to survive themselves and their children<sup>7</sup>.

All these famines are must have been the result of failure of the rains.

## **B) FAMINES: HEAVY RAINS (FLOODS)**

Similarly the Seasonal floods by heavy rains also affected the agriculture. These floods must have been frequent in the coastal Andhradesa as it is the case even now.

According to an anonymous writer, "in the rainy season the land along the coast is usually flooded with water flowing from the mountains, the river cannot discharge the water, and consequently spread over the country, some times causing great damage"<sup>8</sup>. Another E.I.Co., official Methowold reports that "sometimes raining so long together and with such fierceness, that houses loose their foundation in their currants and fall to the ground, from whence also follows great land floods, to this country no less commodious then the inundation of Nile to the Egyptians, by receiving the floods in to their rice grounds and there retaining it until the earth, drinking it in, becomes the better enabled to endure an eighth months abstinence for in eight months it never rained<sup>9</sup>. The above two are eye-witnesses the situation and



who recorded trustworthy accounts.

In A.D. 1631 excessive rainfall flooded the city of Hyderabad, in as much as the water flowed right over the puranapul (old Bridge), which played havoc in the demolition of many lofty buildings of the city<sup>10</sup>. Chundurur Kaifiat mentions another flood by the river Krishna during the time of Abul Hasan Tanashah, which effected several villages, which adjacent to Kuchipudi, inundated and destroyed the crops<sup>11</sup>. Another, in A.D. 1679, a fierce cyclone swept the shores of Machilipatnam and caused untold sufferings to the people.

### C) DISEASES/WAR RELATED FAMINES

After the floods, it was a natural phenomenon that diseases like cholera and plague spreads in the society. When it happened in 1590's Mohd. Quli Qutbshah took up relief activities in which included the disease control measures and also the economic rehabilitation steps by taking up the construction of the great Charminar, in commemoration of the disease related famine. In addition to this, a monumental structure known as Darul-i-shifah can be found constructed in Hyderabad to treat the affected poor people providing the free medicines and food. In addition to above, wars / battles / political uncertainty also causes the economical crises. But in the Kingdom of Golkonda we find only one economic crises. After the seize of Golkonda by the mighty Moghals under the stewardship of Aurangazeb the great in A.D. 1687, there was a economic crises / famine in and surroundings of Hyderabad city due to it thousands of the people suffered a lot for high prices of essentials beside, live loss of the soldiers, etc.

### RELIEF MEASURES

To over come from these famines, the Qutbshahi Government, their premier nobles and private persons strive hard to construct lakes, ponds, wells and dams in the Kingdom and it was also treated as a great sacred tasks.

The following table shows the irrigational sources during the Golconda Government

**TABLE - I**

S.No.	Patron	Yr. A.D.	Dam	Tank	Well	Canal	Location
1.	Maluk	1528	-	-	1	-	Ghanpur Village (Mahaboobnagar district)
2.	Rahmatullah	1560	-	-	-	1	Panagallu (Nalgonda district)
3.	Singa Bhoopaludu	1590	-	1	-	-	Bodogulo (Srikakulam district)
4.	Syed Muzafar	1664	1	-	-	-	Shanigaram (Karimnagar district)
5.	Aga Shriram Saheb 1668	1668	-	-	1	-	Evuru (Guntur district)
6.	Abdul Hussain	1669	-	1	-	-	Kudravelli



7.	Tez Khan	1678	-	-	-	1	(Krishna district)
8.	Krishna Bhoopathi	1686	-	-	1	-	Muttswaram
							Salthuveedu
							(Chittoor district)
	<b>Total</b>	-	1	2	3	2	<b>= 08</b>

\* **Source:** Golconda inscriptions: B.N. Sastri, Mushi Publicating, Hyderabad. 1984.

Besides above table the following table also shows the constructions of water sources in the time of Golconda government.

**TABLE - II**

S.No.	Patron	Tank	Canal	Bund up	Stream	Dam	Renovtion	Well	Location
1.	Ibrahim Qutb shah (1551)	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	Panagallu, Nalgonda district
2.	Ibrahim Qutb shah (1551)	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ibrahim Patnam
3.	Ibrahim Qutb shah (1551)	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Hussain Sagar, Hyderabad
4.	Jamal Khan	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	Allur, Nizam patnam Cirkar
5.	Galib khan	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Wallur, Murtoozanagar Cirkar
6.	Ram Raj Sanjeevappa	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Vittam rajupalle, Cuntur district.
7.	Bhaskaruni Balaramanna	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sarikonda palem, Guntur district.
8.	Yerraiah	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Vonuku Badu, Guntur district.
9.	Syed Meera Hussain	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Meera pharm, Cuddapah, district.
10.	Mir Mohd Mohsin	01	01	-	-	-	-	-	Gandikota, Guntur district.
11.	Abul Hasan tanashah (Lost king)-	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	Chundur, Guntur district, (on Thunga badra river)
12.	Kanam Aga M/o Mohd Qutb Shah	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Masab Tank, Hyderabad
13.	Chilla Timma Reddy	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	Kandukuri Seema, Nellur, district.



14. Obula Sani	01	-	-	-	-	-	Santharavuru, Guntur district
15. Hussain shah wali	-	-	-	-	-	01	Pallavaram
16. Amin Khan 01	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ameer Pur
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>= 20</b>

\* **Source:** SII – X, E.I.M, 1925-26, p.p- 23-25 and 1927 – 28, p. 47,  
charitra – I. P. 30, and Guntur Taluq Kaifiats-III. 5.

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In addition to above, a tank at Budvel (Cuddapah district) Mirjumala tank, Mirpet tank at Hyderabad and seven wells in the fort of Golconda also were constructed and dugout by Qutubshahi government and they followed a tradition that whenever new villages were constructed or renovated the deserted villages, the local chiefs took steps to endow the village with wells, canals or tanks etc.

During the Kakatiya period, the Telangana was called as “the land of thousand lakes” and later the Andhra Rayalaseema regions were developed by the Rayas in irrigation sector. The Qutbshahis added them to some more tanks and wells. Sir, thomus Munroe, who was the English collector, said that “it is mere waste effort to construct new tanks in Rayalaseema area, the tanks were already constructed at every desirable place in very early period”<sup>12</sup>. It is indicated here that every area has a water source in Andhradesa. Before the British rule especially due to the talk construction and protection activities of the preceding dynasties like the Rayas and the Qutubshahis. By constructing the tanks and maintaining the tanks by desilting them, the Qutbshahi rulers made a provision for storing the flood water in times of floods and providing water to the fields, cattle and to the people at the time of draught. Thus the irrigation facilities provided by the Government also indicate the fore sight of the Qutbshahis in facing the epidemics and also the famines.

Though unfortunately the kingdom experienced a number of famines and other natural calamities due to which thousands of people lost their lives and properties, the main causes were lack of rains, heavy rains (floods) and wars which effected the kingdom of Golkonda. The country had suffered from a great famine in 1630-31, a severe famine in 1647, a Dokkalakaruvu etc., which were mostly spoiled the economic life of the people and also the states economy.

We don't know weather they took necessary steps to give any loans in cash or kind to famine effected people from primary or secondary source material found available hither to. But the Qutbshahi government must have taken adequate rehabilitation or relief measures. As mentioned above, Golkonda central and local Governments provided works to labourers and middle class people, who were affected by the famines in all over the kingdom by digging lakes, ponds, dams and wells, etc and construction various public buildings. The government also arranged to build the well ventilated rows of thatched cottages for mining labourers at diamond mines and also to artisans at the rate of free of cost and rent and also provided dispensaries<sup>13</sup> to check the flood and war effected diseases, wounds etc. Hence the



foregoing observations make it clear that the Qutbshahi government was so alert in taking up famine relief activities that it did not leave any possible measure to reduce the grievances of the affected people. Kind hearted Qutbshahis always thought that problems of their subjects were their own problems. Hence we must remember of the quotation of N.V. Ramanayya, that "the Qutbshahis identified themselves with the country they lived in, imbibed the local spirit and assimilated the local traditions and concepts and never regarded themselves as alien conquerors, superior to the people over whom they had sway. They were of course, Muslims but like their subjects they too were Andhras.

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